

Windsor Locks History: Volume II

by
Melvin D. Montemerlo



Main Street, Windsor Locks ~ 1905

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There are a number of specific people who provided great assistance in the preparation of this second volume. They are:

- Bill Fournier, who is a hard-working and highly knowledgeable Windsor Locks historian. He provided information and photographs for a number of chapters, but his real contribution was to answer my frequent questions about town history during the entire period that I was writing this book.
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During Windsor Locks Heritage Week of 2018, I gave a lecture at one of Bill Fournier's Windsor Locks History Club meetings at the Public Library. I was lucky enough to have a photo taken of five Windsor Locks historians. They are, from left to right: Bill Fournier, Chet Pohorylo, Mickey Danyluk, Mel Montemerlo and Bob Pearce.



Windsor Locks Historians - 2018
L-R: Bill Fournier, Chet Pohrylo, Mickey Danyluk,
Mel Montemerlo and Bob Pearce

I would like to thank all of these people, everyone who supported my first volume of Windsor Locks History, and everyone who helped with this second volume.

Mel Montemerlo
 Bel Air, MD
 April 2019

Introduction

This book is Volume II of a two-volume set entitled *Windsor Locks History*. The first volume was published in November 2017. It was obvious at that time, that there were important topics that hadn't been covered in the first volume. One area was "outstanding Windsor Locks people". This volume includes chapters on Ray Roncari, who put together and led a large construction company and was a community leader. Another is Harry Brusie, was one of Windsor Locks' greatest Windsor Locks athlete. A third is John A. Chapman, who was awarded the Medal of Honor. Articles on Ray, Harry and John are in this volume. Bradley Field, the Police Department, the Fire Department, Charley Kaman and the 1965 Little League World Championship team are also covered here.

The story of Alfred N. Converse, a highly respected town leader and businessman, who embezzled so much money from the Windsor Locks Savings bank, that the bank folded, is told in this volume.

There are a number of well known businesses that are covered here: the J. R. Montgomery & Co, Inc., Swede's Jewelers, Lillian's Shoppe, the Brown Derby, the North Street Market, and more. There were places that were not in Windsor Locks, but that its people visited often, and thus were part of "Windsor Locks life". They include: Enfield Square, Crand's Candy Castle, G.Fox & Co., and Riverside Park. There were other very interesting places in town with interesting stories: the Fish Hatchery, RAM Hosiery, the ancient town hall, the Polish and Italian social clubs and the Burnap Mansion. There are some "human interest" stories such as Johnny Menko and his Polish band, and Wasyl Szykula, the "Singing Carpenter" that everyone from Windsor Locks should know about. There is also the story about Miss Jane Carr, who was returning to Windsor Locks to claim her savings at the Windsor Locks Savings Bank that had folded, when she died aboard the Titanic. There is also a chapter which briefly covers eighteen businesses that existed in 1900s. That group of businesses provide insight in to Windsor Locks life in that timeframe

The Windsor Locks Centennial celebration and the Main Street Redevelopment Project are described here. No history is complete without some humor. This volume has chapters on humorous Windsor Locks post cards, Windsor Locks jokes, and a set of old ads from the *Windsor Locks Journal* that will make you smile. Finally this volume also has two chapters that describe how life changed in a century, and how school life has changed.

Any written history of a town is never "complete". If it was complete, it would be so thick that no-one could pick it up. So, one stops when enough of the stories (histories) of the town's notable people, places and events have been covered that the "nature" or the "character" of the town have been described, and to some degree, explained. There are two articles in this volume which

attempt to do that in different ways. The first chapter attempts to lay out the eight factors which were most powerful in shaping Windsor Locks history. Another chapter presents 26 images of Windsor Locks from 1961 to 1975, which attempt to give a brief visual history of the town.

Hopefully the reader will find these stories to be both enjoyable and useful in revisiting the Windsor Locks that existed from 1863 to 1975. This two-volume set does not cover anything past the Main Street Redevelopment Project that finished in the mid 1970s.

My goal in writing the History of Windsor Locks was to make it available to as many Windsor Locksians as possible. My goal was to write a history that Windsor Locks folks:

- would find easy and fun to read.
- could download from the internet, at no cost.
- could obtain printed copies of.
- would bring back nostalgic memories for those who remember the Windsor Locks that existed before the early 1970s, when the old Main St. still existed.
- could be used by Mr. Erick Knickerbocker's Windsor Locks Middle School History Club for their annual history project competition.

Anyone who wants to use information that is in this two-volume set has my permission to do so. There is no need to contact me for such permission. This book was written for you. Please use it. I thank you for doing so.

I tried to make the chapters as easy and fun to read as possible by keeping them short. Most are between five and ten pages including photographs. The photos were included to make the topics easy to visualize. The chapters can be read in any sequence.

To make sure that *Windsor Locks History*, and this second volume, are as widely distributed as possible, both were put on the internet so that they can be downloaded by anyone at no cost. They are available at archive.org. Just go to that computer address and do a search on "Windsor Locks history," and you will find both volumes, which can be downloaded.

If you are interested in getting a printed copy of either or both books, write an email to me at mel@windsorlockshistory.com. The Windsor Locks Public Library and the Windsor Locks Historical Society have copies.

I hope that this volume of *Windsor Locks History*, and the one which preceded it, bring you much enjoyment. I hope that they help you visualize "the old Windsor Locks," and that they help you describe our town's past to your children and grandchildren.

Thank you very much.

Mel Montemerlo

Bel Air, MD

April 2019

Chapter 1

Eight Factors that Shaped Windsor Locks History

The most difficult question that anyone could ask about the history of Windsor Locks is: what were the most powerful shapers of the town's history? Another way of asking the same question is: what handful of things were most responsible for bringing the town into its current form?

If four Windsor Locks historians were asked to come up with such a list, they would not come up with identical lists. However, there would be a good deal of overlap in their lists. In writing my book *Windsor Locks History*, I tasked myself with generating such a list as a way of controlling the length of the book. To do so, one must come up with a way of determining which were the most important things in the town's past. Such a list helps both in selecting the material to include in the book, and in helping to organize the topics that are selected for inclusion.

Please feel free to generate your own list, and ask a friend to do the same. Then get together and compare ideas. You will find the task to be challenging and rewarding. You will find that your understanding of town history has grown both larger and deeper. Here is my list of the eight factors which were most important in shaping Windsor Locks history. They are in chronological order.

1. Some of the earliest settlers of the Pine Meadow section of Windsor were not just farmers. They were accomplished entrepreneurs. They built mills. One of those mills grew to be Dexter's, which was for a long time, the largest employer in town. They set the tone for the development of industry in Windsor Locks.
2. In 1769, the fathers of two of those early settlers bought 160 acres of land between the Connecticut River and Center Street which became "Downtown Windsor Locks". Windsor Locks was incorporated in 1854.
3. There were falls in the river by Enfield. If wasn't for Enfield Falls, there would have been no need for a canal, and Windsor Locks might well have remained the Pine Meadow section of Windsor.
4. A group of factories grew up along the canal to make use of the water power that it offered. They were the main economic base of the town from about 1850 to about 1950. The fortunes of those factories rose and fell along with the fortunes of the manufacturing industry across the entire United States.

5. The factories along the canal needed a lot of unskilled laborers. That is why so many European immigrants came to Windsor Locks. Those immigrants, who came here with no money, little education and not being able to speak English, became solid American citizens who built strong families and good careers. Windsor Locks is an immigrant town.
6. Dexter Drake Coffin heard that a military airfield was going to be built at Brainard Field. He fought for, and succeeded in getting it built in Windsor Locks. It became Bradley Field, and it was accompanied by the growth of aerospace companies near it. The importance of Mr. Coffin's accomplishment on the evolution of Windsor Locks cannot be overstated.
7. The state of Connecticut built a highway system, including I-91, that enabled Windsor Locks to become a place where people could live, but work in other towns and cities. That significantly changed the nature of the town. Before the highway system, if you lived in town, you worked in town.
8. The 1965-1970 Main Street Redevelopment Project turned Main Street from an aging shopping area into a grassy area. Since its earliest days, the downtown area was the business and social center of the town. Main Street was a bustling area. The growth of the area between West Street and Bradley Field in the 1950s reduced the importance of Main Street as the town center. The Main Street Redevelopment Project put the nail in the coffin of the Downtown section. The town leaders promised that the old businesses would be replaced by new businesses. That never happened.

CONCLUSION

This list of eight factors which played major roles in shaping the history of Windsor Locks is a brief history of the town. It is not a complete history, but it is a good list of things which affected much of our town's history. If someone asked me to give a talk on the history of Windsor Locks with no preparation, I would use this list as the core of my talk.

Chapter 2

Windsor Locks History: A Photographic Timeline

The purpose of this chapter is to present a sequence of 25 dated images which show how Windsor Locks changed over a century. The images date from 1861 to 1975. The images include two maps and 22 photographs and a print. The goal is not to present an in-depth history of the town. That would take a few volumes. The goal is to give a visual overview, somewhat in the manner of a motion picture. There were eleven decades in those 110 years, and there are images from each of the eleven decades.

Why choose 1861 and 1975 as the end dates of this history? The downtown of Windsor Locks was anchored by 15 large commercial buildings. These were called “Blocks” at the time. The archaic term is now only used by historians. A “block” was a large multi-function commercial building. You will see a number of them in this chapter. They were coming into their own in the mid 1800s. One of those blocks was the Charter Oak Hotel, which later became the Windsor Locks Hotel. It was built in 1861. It was directly across Main Street from the Railroad Station so it shows up in many of the photographs. The sequence of photos ends in about 1975, when the urban redevelopment program known as the Main Street Redevelopment Project was just about over.

The first photo is of the Railroad Passenger Station in 1861. The Windsor Locks passenger station is across Main Street from the Charter Oak Hotel, which opened in 1861. It was owned by Henry Cutler, who operated it until he died in 1900. The white crossbar which is held up by two white posts to the right of the Hotel, is a sign for “Connelly Stables” which is over a path up to the stables.



Windsor Locks Railroad Passenger Station 1861
Across street - Charter Oak Hotel opened in 1861

The next picture is a print of factories along the canal in 1865.



Factories along the Canal - 1865

Notice that there are boats in the canal. While folks from Windsor Locks usually refer to it as “the Windsor Locks Canal,” its official name is “the Enfield Canal”. If the rapids/falls did not exist in the Connecticut River near Enfield, then the canal would never have been built, and Windsor Locks would not have built up to the point where it could break away from Windsor, and become a separate town.

In 1829, the canal was built to provide for the transportation of goods and people, and to provide water power for factories that could be built along it. It worked, at least for a while. The canal did provide the needed transportation around the rapids at Enfield. However, in 1845, the railroad was built through Windsor Locks and the transportation that it provided was easier, cheaper and more convenient than travel by boat. As a result, the canal was not much used for transportation after the 1840s. The canal’s transportation heyday only lasted about a decade. However, the water power provided by the canal caused a number of factories to be built along it. By 1865, there were twelve factories along the Canal in Windsor Locks. (Chapter 33 of “Windsor Locks History” by Mel Montemerlo, 2017)

It is important to remember that Windsor Locks was primarily a town of immigrants. They came because of the available jobs for people with no skills. That is what the factories along the canal needed.

The following photo of a Dexter boat in the canal is from about the same timeframe as the above print.



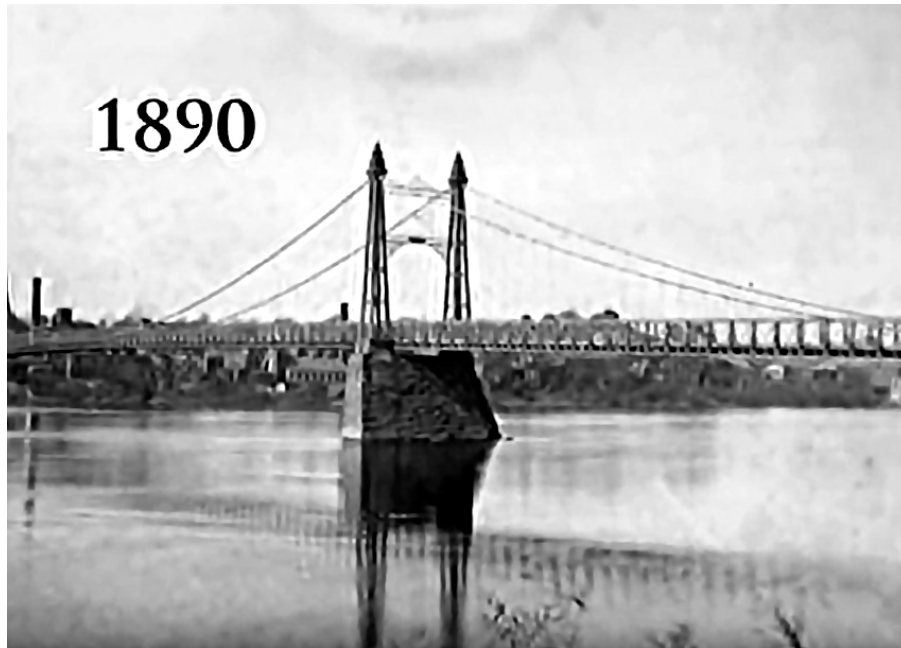
Dexter boat in the canal - circa 1850-65

Below is a print of the Windsor Locks town map from 1877. The location of the original Windsor Locks High School is noted. You can see St. Mary's church. On the right, you can see parts of Oak and Grove Streets. On the left is Kettle Brook, where the original Dexter factory was situated.



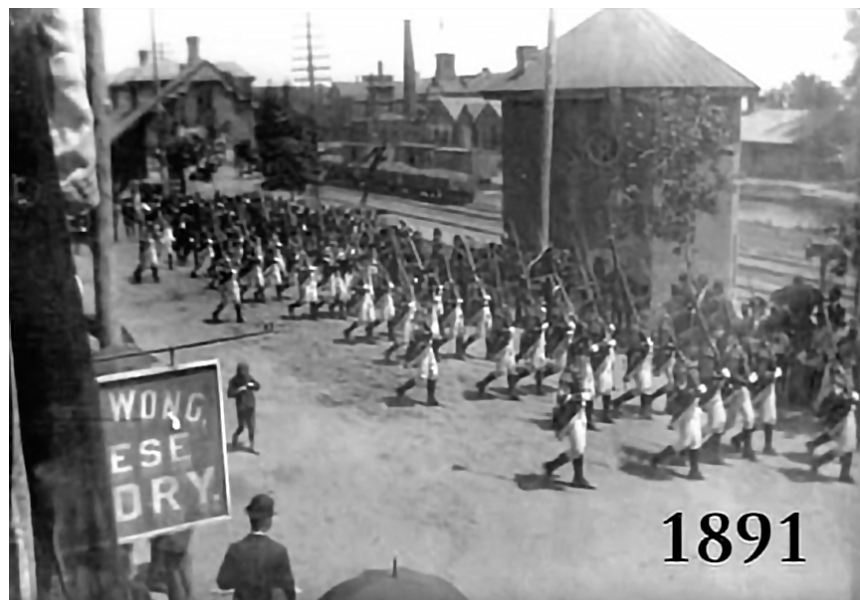
Windsor Locks town print - 1877

Below is an 1890 photo of the first suspension bridge across the Connecticut River from Windsor Locks to Warehouse Point. The Bridge was built in 1886 and it lasted until 1921. It was a one lane, toll bridge. Driving a car across it cost 25 cents to cross in 1907. They charged a pedestrian three cents.



Suspension Bridge to Warehouse Pt.-1890

Next is a photo of the Memorial Hall Dedication parade on Main Street. It was taken on June 10, 1891. Notice the large, round, water tower on the right.



Memorial Hall Dedication Parade, June 10, 1891.

The Railroad Station is in the upper left of the photo. Notice the “Wong Chinese Laundry” sign on the lower right. It was one of two Chinese laundries at the time. The other was on the upper floor of the building on the South corner of Grove and Main Streets. You can see that this photo was taken from the second floor of a building on the South corner of Oak and Main Streets. At that time, the it was known as the Pease Building. Later, the first floor of this building would house Sid’s Modern Drug store.

The freight station was just north of the passenger station. The following is an 1891 photo of the freight station.



Freight Station, north of Passenger Station - 1891

The Memorial Hall was built in 1891. Here it is, shortly after that, in 1905.



Memorial Hall - 1905

Below is a 1910 photo of the building on the north corner of Spring and Main Streets. It was owned by A. W. Converse. It was also known as the "Masonic Block". Later, Marconi Brothers Luncheonette would be in the corner store at the street level. Just two years after this photo, Mr. Converse, who was Treasurer of the Windsor Locks Savings Bank, was found to have embezzled a large sum from the bank, which caused the bank to fail. He shot himself, and died in 1912. His building lived on. It also housed the Post Office and the Windsor Locks Public Library.



Building owned by A.W.Converse - 1910

Next is a 1913 photo of Leo Viola's confectionary store on the corner. It is in the Barrett building, on the North corner of Church and Main Streets. Note that automobiles were in town by this time.



Leo Viola's Store is on the left. Barrett Bldg., Main St. 1913

The next image is a segment of the 1913 map of Windsor Locks. You can see the bridge from Warehouse Point. On the right is the corner of Chestnut and Main St. You can see St. Mary's Church on Spring St. and St Mary's School on Grove St. It can be seen that the downtown section of the town is getting crowded. The part of the map that is above the part shown indicates that there were few buildings west of Center Street. Compare this with the earlier map.



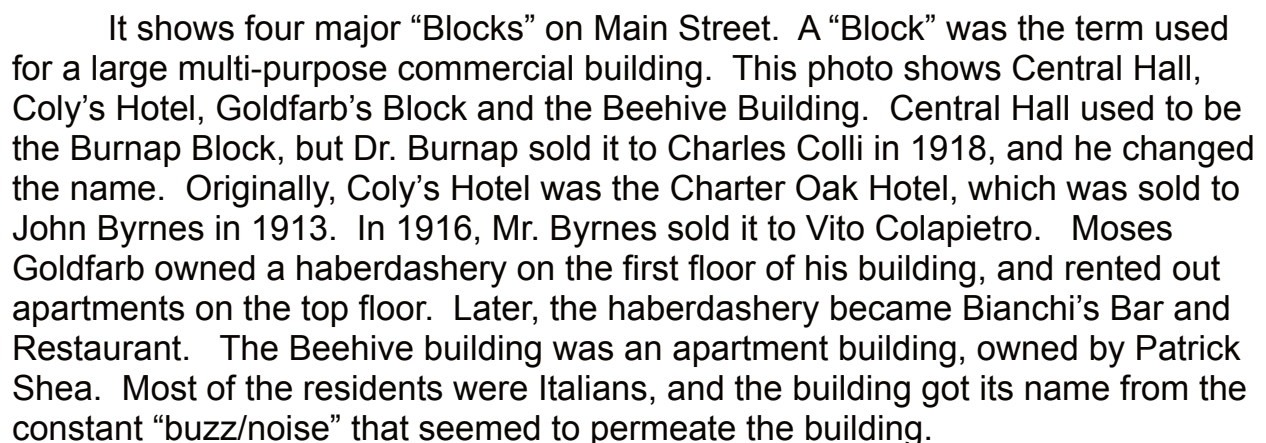
Part of 1913 Map of Windsor Locks

The next photo is of Main Street near the railroad station in 1915.



Main St. 1915. Brick building is the Burnap Block. Next is Charter Oak Hotel.

The next photo is from 1925.



The following is a photo of the 1936 flood. The Connecticut River floods often. According to "Historic Floods of New England," there were 17 floods near Hartford in three centuries (1683-1955). That averages about one flood every 20 years. The floods are not "regular" in their frequency. In that time period, there were no floods during the 1700s. The important point for the history of Windsor Locks is that floods are a fact of life in the flood plain between the river and the canal. On River Road in Windsor Locks, there are two poles with the heights of past floods. One is for the deepest floods. The pole for the deepest floods shows the levels for the 1936, 1938 and 1955 floods. The pole for the less deep floods has markers for: 1973, 1989, 1996, 2001, 2005 and 2007. The history of Windsor Locks cannot be reviewed without mention of floods.



Montgomery building during 1936 flood

The second Windsor Locks High School was built in 1941.



Second Windsor Locks High School - 1941

The Windsor Locks men who fought in World War II began to return home in the mid 1940s. Many of them started businesses which changed Windsor Locks forever. For example, Charles Tenerowicz and his wife, Stella, opened the Charles-Ten Restaurant, which lasted until 2017. Stan Szwed and his wife, Julia, founded Swede's Jewelers in 1946. Ray Roncari got back from the war and joined his brothers and turned Roncari Construction Company into a major corporation. Tony Colapietro returned home and opened Tony's Soda Shoppe.

Bradley Field started in the 1940s as an Army Air Base. Businesses near Bradley Field, such as the Villa Rose and Bradley Lanes, prospered.

Here is a 1942 photo of the Army's Bradley Field.



Bradley Field, Hanger 3, Martin B26s, Lockheed A-29s about 1942

The arrival of the military airfield in Windsor Locks was a boon to local businesses that already existed. New businesses began to develop, which changed the face of Windsor Locks. They included aviation businesses such as Hamilton Standard and Kaman Aircraft. The large influx of people into the town required new housing to be built. Previously, the land between Center Street and Turnpike Road was agricultural. In the late 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, that land became filled with new houses. Companies such as Roncari Construction prospered with this new growth. When the military airfield became a commercial airfield in 1947, new hotels, restaurants and parking facilities were needed to take care of the passengers. Windsor Locks' growth really took off.

One of the first aviation companies to come to Windsor Locks was Kaman Aircraft Co. Charlie Kaman started his company near Bradley Field in 1947, and was actually producing helicopters in 1948. He set up shop in a building that was a gymnasium for the former Army airfield. Soon he had hundreds of employees.

A vintage black and white photograph showing two men operating a large, complex mechanical device, possibly a pump or engine, mounted on a wheeled frame. The device is connected to a large, dark, rectangular structure, likely a fuel tank or storage container. The background shows a wooden building and a body of water.

Charlie Kaman testing radical rotor design, using frame of a 1933 Pontiac, Bradley Field, 1946

A black and white photograph of a small, single-story wooden building with horizontal siding. A large sign is mounted on the roof, reading "BRADLEY FIELD WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN." and "AT FORD, CONN." Below this, smaller text includes "SPECIAL PASSENGER", "CONC. APPROVAL OF", and "COMMISSION". A metal cage or trailer is parked in front of the building. The building has a gabled roof and a small entrance with a door. A utility pole is visible in the background.

Bradley Field, Original passenger terminal, about 1947

Below is a photo of the main terminal at Bradley Field in 1953.



Bradley Field Terminal - 1953

To cope with the growth of the town's population, more school space was needed. Here is the third Windsor Locks High School.



Third Windsor Locks High School - 1955

The Golden Age of the Windsor Locks retail area on Main Street was from about 1900 to the 1960s. Downtown was a vibrant place with plenty of hustle and bustle, as the following photo shows.



Main Street, Windsor Locks - 1960s

In the 1960s, the town government thought, that the buildings along Main Street, many of which had been build in the late 1800s and the early 1900s, were deteriorating. There had been fires. Shonty's Bar and Restaurant, and Sid's Modern Drug store had burned. They decided to do urban renewal. It was called the Main Street Redevelopment Project. The town would buy the businesses, the buildings and the land, and tear buildings down. They promised that new businesses would come in and replace the old ones. The first part happened. The stores were purchased by the town. For a while, many had "for rent" signs on them, but none got rented. When the owners abandoned the buildings, they quickly went into accelerated deterioration. The town looked sad and desolate at this time, which was the end of the 1960s. This can be seen in the following photograph of Coly's Hotel, Bianchi's Bar and Restaurant and Shonty's.



Coly's Hotel, Bianchi's and Shonty's shut down in late 1960s

In the 1970s, all of the buildings on the West side of Main Street were demolished by the town. The new businesses that were promised by town leaders to replace the old businesses never showed up. Main Street was turned into a quiet, restful green space. Many promises have been made to "revitalize" Main Street since the Main Street Redevelopment Program. Below is a photo of Main Street in the 1970s.



Main Street after Redevelopment -1970s

Conclusions

Twenty-six images, consisting of photographs and maps, were presented to give a visual overview of how Windsor Locks changed from 1860 to 1975. The goal was to focus on the evolution of the town. Anyone with a large collection of old Windsor Locks photos could substitute other photos for the ones used, as long as they came from same timeframes, and covered all of the decades of that 110 year period. It was easy to see

- the changing styles of dress and of architecture
- the change from unpaved to paved streets
- the effect of the end of World War II on Windsor Locks business growth
- the change in the economic base from factories to Bradley Field
- how the town's land went from sparsely to densely populated
- the changes in transportation from canal to train to airplane
- the change from horses to cars for local transportation
- the changing look and feel of the downtown area, and of the Bradley Field area

If someone was called upon to give a short, visual presentation on Windsor Locks history, this set of photos would suffice. It could be made longer or shorter, depending on time constraints. Other photos of the same timeframes could be substituted. Different speakers would focus on different things. The focus is on the changing nature of the town rather than on historical completeness.

Sources

“Old Windsor Locks”, a video found on
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<https://pubs.usgs.gov/wsp/1779m/report.pdf>

Chapter 3

The Windsor Locks Centennial Celebration

The area which is now Windsor Locks was originally the Pine Meadow section of Windsor Connecticut. When the canal was built along the river, to allow boats to pass the falls in river at Enfield, a settlement grew up along the canal, near the locks. That settlement became a town when it was incorporated in 1854. In 1954, a Bicentennial celebration was held. It was a grand celebration with a number of events, including:

- a parade
- dedication of a new Town Hall
- a Centennial Ball
- a community picnic
- a fishing derby
- a track and field event for children
- a block dance
- boats coming through the canal

To commemorate the Centennial, a special coin was minted and sold.



Windsor Locks Centennial
Commemorative Coin - 1954

Also to commemorate the Centennial a booklet was published, entitled "The Story of Windsor Locks: 1863-1954". It included a 14 page history of the town, as well as descriptions of the schools, churches, large companies, and old houses of the town. Copies of the book are currently (2018) available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

The *Windsor Locks Journal* of May 27, 1954 had an article which described the events of the Centennial celebration. The first event, which was held on Saturday, May 14, 1954. The Honorary Grand Marshall was Dexter D. Coffin, president of the C.H.Dexter & Sons Company. There were almost 75 groups and floats in the parade. Here are some photographs of the parade.



Dr. Ettore Carneglia and wife, Blanche, ready for the parade



Teddy Pohorylo, John Driscoll, Florence Pohorylo & Hazel Reed







Gov. Lodge

Jane Pastamerlo
Centennial Queen

Howard White

Loretta Looney, Rev. Peck

Windsor Locks
Centennial
1954

A Fishing Derby was held at Mill Pond at 7:30AM on Sat., May 14, 1957.



The Centennial Ball was held in the high school auditorium on Saturday evening. It included dancing, and the crowning of the Centennial Queen, Jane Pastamerlo. Below is a photo of Leo and Lena Montemerlo dancing at the ball.



Lena & Leo Montemerlo

There were boats going through the canal on the Saturday of the Windsor Locks Centennial.



All in all, the Windsor Locks Centennial events were a fitting way to celebrate the first 100 years of our town.

Sources

Photo of the Centennial coin is from William Fournier

Photos of the Centennial parade are from the Windsor Locks Historical Society website

Other photos of the Centennial Ball, etc., are from photographs given to Leo and Lena Montemerlo after their work on the Centennial Ball.

Chapter 4

Bradley Field: A Historical Overview



Bradley Field

Bradley International Airport (BDL) is an airport in Windsor Locks, CT that serves both civilian and military aviation. It is the second largest airport in New England. It is owned by the state of Connecticut, and is operated by the Connecticut Airport Authority.

Bradley Field is Connecticut's busiest commercial airport, and is the second-busiest airport in New England, after Boston's Logan International Airport. It served approximately 614 million passengers in 2017. As a dual-use facility with the U.S. Air Force, the airport is also home to the 103d Airlift Wing (103 AW) of the Connecticut Air National Guard.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bradley_International_Airport)

The above numbers do not fully convey the importance of Bradley Field to Windsor Locks. Windsor Locks had been a manufacturing town from about 1850 when the manufacturing mills began to be built along the canal, to about 1950, when only a few mills remained in operation. The mills had been the main source of revenue and employment for the town of Windsor Locks during that century-long period. However by about 1950, the manufacturing era of Windsor Locks had run its course.

Windsor Locks needed a new economic driver. Bradley Field provided it. Thousands of jobs were created on the airfield, and in the surrounding area where commercial aviation companies, such as Hamilton Standard and Kaman

Aircraft set up shop. Hotels, restaurants, gas stations and parking services were built to serve the airport's passengers. The town could not tax the airport land or the activities on it because the state of Connecticut owned the airport land. However all of the commercial aviation companies and the businesses that supported the passengers were on Windsor Locks land, so they contributed heavily to the town's tax base. The airport and the surrounding businesses provided thousands of jobs. The population of Windsor Locks grew rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s to fill those jobs.

Those employees needed housing. New housing was build on the land between West Street and Bradley Field, which had been primarily agricultural.

Further, Bradley Field "put Windsor Locks on the map." Prior to the airport, the town was not well known outside of the local area. As a result of Bradley Field, Windsor Locks attained national and international visibility.

Interestingly, the idea of having the airfield built in Windsor Locks was developed and advocated by one person, Dexter Drake Coffin, who was the president of the Dexter Corp. When he heard that there was a plan to build a military airport at Brainard Field in Hartford, he went into action, and convinced the Governor that it should be built in Windsor Locks. It worked.

Mr. Coffin worked hard and creatively to have the airbase built in Windsor Locks. If one had to pick the one person who had the greatest positive effect on the town, it could well be Dexter Drake Coffin. It is interesting that the head of the Dexter Corporation, which was the largest manufacturing enterprise in town, was responsible for replacing manufacturing with aviation as the town's main industry. He didn't do it at a politician. He didn't do it to make money. He did it as a concerned citizen.



Dexter Drake Coffin 1898-1966

The purpose of this article is to provide a concise overview of the history of Bradley from its inception in 1941 to the time of this writing (2019).

Bradley Field During World War II

World War II had begun in Europe by 1939, and the United States was preparing for its defense. Dexter Drake Coffin, the President of the Dexter Corporation was very interested in aviation. Dexter Corporation operated a corporate aircraft out of Brainard Airport in Hartford. The Army was planning to take over Brainard Field and use it as a military air base. Civilian aviation would no longer be permitted at Brainard. Mr. Coffin came up with the idea of an

airport in Windsor Locks. He explored a number of options. At the same time, the Army realized that Brainard Field was not capable of handling their needs. The political machinations that ensued were complex. The short version is that Mr. Coffin worked hard to get the Army airbase built in Windsor Locks. In 1941, Congress passed a bill authorizing \$2.6M for the construction of Windsor Locks Air Base. The state of Connecticut bought the land for the airport.

The Windsor Locks Army Air Base was operational in 1941, the year in which it was built. There was a great deal of discussion about renaming the Air Base, but when Lt. Eugene Bradley became the first trainee to die at the air base, it was decided to name the field after him. In 1942, the name was officially changed to: "Army Air Base, Bradley Field, Connecticut". Below is a photo of the one of the hangers at the airfield in 1942



Bradley Field, Hanger 3, Martin B26s, Lockheed A-29s about 1942

Bradley Field played a number of different roles for the Army during World War II, including pilot training, and the movement of personnel and goods to and from Europe. One of its more interesting roles was that of a Prisoner of War Camp for captured German soldiers. Most of the prisoners of war were happy to be there during the waning days of the war. While they were in prison there, they were treated very well. See the photo to the right.



German Prisoners of War repairing fence at Bradley Field 1944

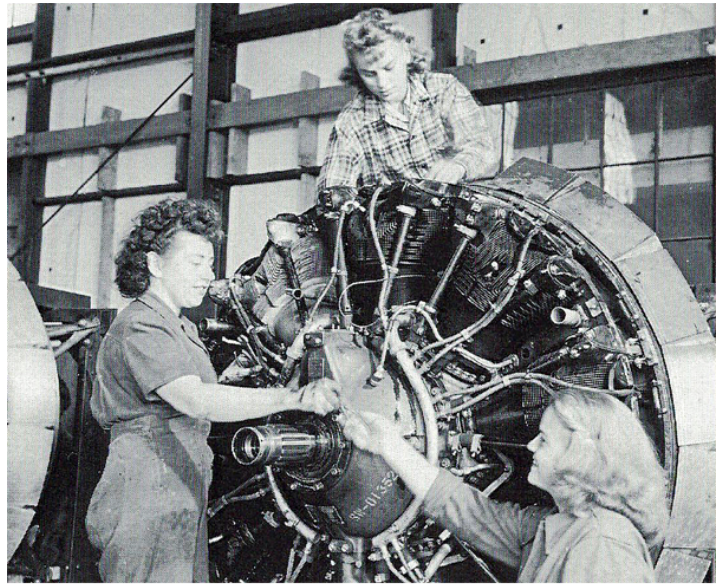
It should be noted that during the war years, 40% of the civilian mechanics at Bradley Field were women. See the photo to the right.

On August 30, 1945, Bradley Field was deactivated as a military base. On Nov. 3, 1945, Bradley Field was classified as “standby”. At that time, 28 enlisted men and 100 civilian employees remained.

One would think that the transfer of the airfield from the Army to the state of Connecticut would be simple and straightforward. It was anything but that. It was complicated.

There were continuing, frustrating delays. Finally, Mr. Murphy, the Chairman of the Connecticut Aeronautics Commission, walked into the

base commander’s office, along with two policemen, and announced that he was “taking Bradley Field back in the name of the state of Connecticut”. But the wrangling continued. The last military personnel departed Bradley Field on October 10, 1946. On October 15, 1948, a quitclaim deed was signed that transferred the airport to the state of Connecticut. That was the end of the federal government’s control of Bradley Field.



**40% of civilian mechanics were women.
Bradley Field, about 1943**

Civilian Aviation Begins at Bradley Field

Bradley Field transitioned from an Army airfield to an airport to be used for both commercial and military aviation. Bradley Field became host to the Air National Guard and to the Air Force Reserve, as well as to commercial aviation companies such as Kaman Aircraft, as it took on the role of commercial aviation both for passengers and for cargo. The Air National Guard arrived there in 1946. The Air Force Reserve began operating there in the 1950s.

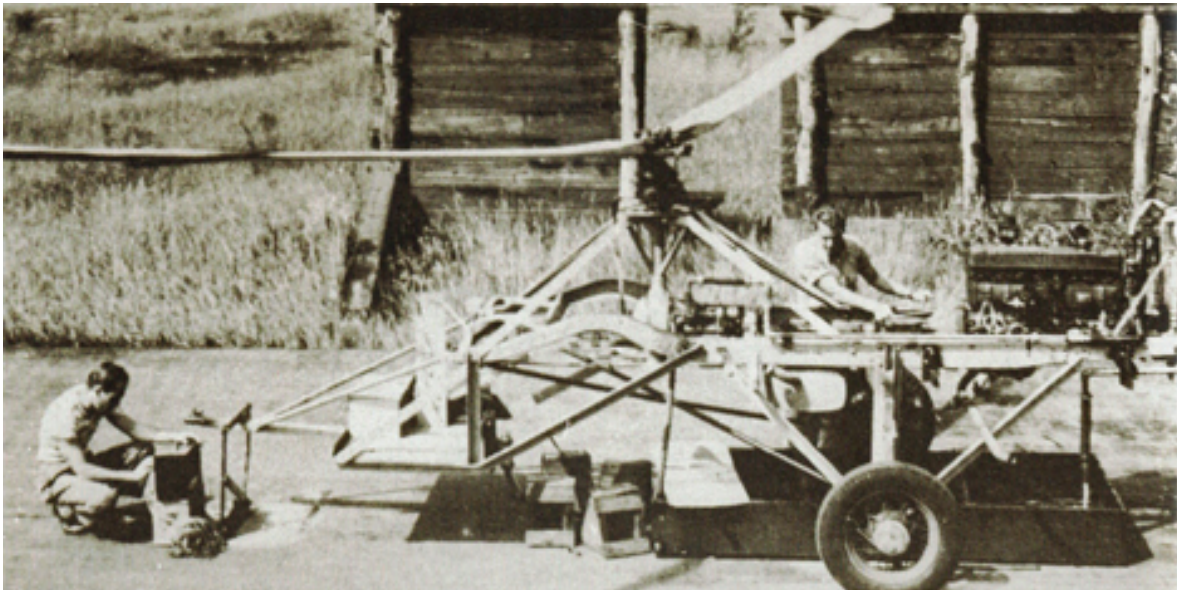
Commercial aviation actually began at Bradley Field while it was still under military control. The War Assets Administration allowed the Connecticut Aeronautics Commission to lease out some facilities for commercial use. The Aircraft Service Corporation leased a hangar, a warehouse and a machine shop in 1946 to convert military airplanes for commercial use. United Airlines Corporation leased the large warehouse at about that time. In 1945, Bradley Field started leasing facilities to a number of small start-up aviation businesses.

One of the new start-ups was Kaman Aircraft Company, which eventually grew into a multi-billion dollar international company. In 1947, Charlie Kaman set up shop in the former gymnasium at Bradley Field. He was actually

producing helicopters by 1948. In 1951, Kaman only had 23 employees, and was just beginning a period of rapid growth. By January of 1952, it had built a large new building, and had 700 employees. Mr. Kaman built new facilities in Bloomfield, but was back to Bradley Field in 1961.

Then Mr. Kaman added a new business. He formed a company to provide full-service, fixed-base operations, and opened Learjet and Beach aircraft dealerships. Services included 24 hour fuel/oil services for the airlines and ground support equipment, air ambulance and charter services, light aircraft maintenance, radio sales and services and flight instruction. Charlie Kaman had a big effect in the growth of the aviation at Bradley Field. See photo of Mr. Kaman below.

The photo of Charley Kaman is followed by photos of the airfield and the original wooden passenger terminal.



Charlie Kaman testing radical rotor design, using frame of a 1933 Pontiac, Bradley Field, 1946



Bradley Field: First passenger terminal, main WWII hanger. ~1947



Bradley Field, Original passenger terminal, about 1947

A Chronological List of Important Happenings at Bradley Field

The following is a chronological list of important events at Bradley Field from the time it began civilian operations until 2018.

1946 - The State government and the airlines brought pressure to improve the facilities at Bradley Field. A master plan was put in place, money was made available, and upgrades began.

- The first cargo flight was made into Bradley Field.
- A new air freight terminal was privately funded.

1947 - Commercial aviation began at Bradley International Airport.

- The first commercial flight was Eastern Air Lines Flight 624. Its captain was Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, the WWII ace who was then president of Eastern Airlines.

- Airlines began moving into Bradley Field. They included, Eastern Airlines, United Airlines, Northeast Airlines and American Airlines.
- International cargo operations at the airport began.

1950 - Bradley International Airport exceeded 100,000-passengers.

- Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower broke ground for a new terminal.

1951 - Hamilton Standard bought land adjacent to Bradley Field, and built an \$11 M plant. By 1957, it had doubled in size. In 1952 Hamilton Standard opened its plant in Windsor Locks, Connecticut.

1952 - The new Murphy Terminal opened. Below is a photo.



Bradley Field: Murphy Terminal 1952

1957 - TWA began service at Bradley Field.

- There were 39 weekday departures at Bradley Field.

1958 - A fourteen unit hotel was built across from Hamilton Standard.

- A temporary international terminal was started. Insiders referred to it as the "Plywood Palace". A permanent international terminal was not available until 1970.

1959 - A big air show attracted 125,000 visitors.

1960 - Bradley Field handled more than a half million passengers.

1961 - Cargo totaled 24.4 million pounds

- Jetliner service was initiated.

1964 - An Air Show attracted over a quarter of a million visitors.

1965 - An 11-project, \$7.7M improvement program was initiated which included two new jet passenger wings to the terminal, a new international passenger wing, additional loading ramps, more air cargo bays, a new hotel, and rental car maintenance garages. The split level concept was developed, with arrivals on the lower level of the terminal and departures on the upper level.

1966 - The airport was renamed "Bradley International Airport"

1968 - Non-stop flights to Los Angeles began.

1969 - Hamilton's environmental systems played a big role in the 1969 Apollo 11 Moon landing, which used environmental control, fuel cell,

and life support systems that were developed and manufactured by Hamilton Standard.

1971 - Murphy Terminal added an International Arrivals wing.

1976 - An experimental monorail was completed to link the terminal to a parking lot seven-tenths of a mile away. The "people mover" cost \$4 million and was anticipated to cost \$250 thousand annually to operate. Due to the high anticipated operating cost, the monorail was never put in service, and was dismantled in 1984 to make room for a new terminal building.



Automated "People Mover" built for Bradley Field, Finished in 1976. Never used. Stored in CT Trolley Museum.

1977 - Instrument Landing Systems were installed on two runways.

1979 - In 1979, a tornado hit part of the airport. The New England Air Museum was badly damaged, and closed for repairs.

1981 - The New England Air Museum re-opened.

1986 - The newly built Terminal A opened.
- The Bradley Sheraton Hotel opened.
- The Roncari cargo terminal was constructed.

2001 - The Terminal Improvement Project was initiated to expand Terminal A with a new concourse, construct a new International Arrivals Building and centralize passenger screening.

2002 - a new International Arrivals Building opened.

2007 - Bradley International Airport was named one of the top five small airports in the North American Airport Satisfaction Study by J. D. Power and Associates.

2010 - Murphy Terminal was closed. It was the oldest passenger terminal in the US.

2016 - In the year ending March 31, 2016, the airport had 93,678 aircraft operations, averaging 257 per day.

2017 - Bradley Field serviced 3,214,976 passengers.

This chronological listing of major events at Bradley Field provides a concise overview of the history of the airport. Anyone who is interested in a detailed history of Bradley Field should read Thomas Palshaw's "Bradley Field: The First 25 Years." More information on any of the specific events listed above can be found by a search on the internet. The next photo is a 2015 photo of Bradley Field terminal entrance.



Bradley Field terminal entrance ~2015

Visiting Bradley Field in the 1940s, 50s and 60s

Visiting Bradley Field in the 1940s, 50s and 60s was a vastly different experience than a visit in 2019. In the late 1940s and in the 1950s, parents would take their children for a drive to Bradley Field. They would park the car near the wooden buildings, and watch the propellor-driven aircraft take off and land. It was exciting to watch. One dreamed about possibly flying in an aircraft sometime in the future.

Back in the 1950s, if someone in your family was going to fly out of Bradley Field, the whole family would accompany them to the airport. Everyone dressed up in their "Sunday best" for that special event. When you

arrived at the terminal, you went to a machine that sold life insurance for that flight. It accepted quarters. Below is a photo of an insurance vending machine similar to the one that were at Bradley Field.

When you went to the airport to take a flight back then, you didn't eat in the terminal before the flight because you were looking forward to the excellent meal you would get on the flight. Below is a photo of an in-flight meal from about that time.



Insurance vending machines at airports in the 1950s and 1960s



Airline seating and meals in 1958

Flying was much different back then. Men and women dressed well for the flight. Not only were the meals lavish, but drinks and snacks were free. That included alcoholic drinks. You could see that the stewardesses had copious quantities of small liquor bottles, which they distributed rather freely to adults. On longer flights, you were given travel bags with toothpaste, a razor, a comb, deodorant, aspirin and mouthwash, and you often received a pair of slippers with the name of the airline embossed on them. They were yours to keep.

The ratio of stewardesses to passengers was much greater in the 1950s and 60s. At the airport and in the airplane, you felt that the airline was truly happy to have you as a guest, and they were going to do everything they could to make your flight a very enjoyable experience. Your baggage was taken before you got on the flight, and no one measured the size of your "carry on". You didn't wait in lines. The seats were large and comfortable. The stewardesses were very attentive.

Times have changed for passengers and for airlines. The 1950s and 1960s are now referred to as the "Golden Years of Commercial Aviation". Some things have gotten worse and some have gotten better. It is far cheaper and

safer to fly now, and there are more places that you can go. While seats may be smaller and service may be less generous now, it is far easier to find things to do to pass the time in the modern era, both in an airport and in an airplane. There were no portable computers, cell phones, or on-board movies back then.

This article has been a review of the history of Bradley Field. Bradley Field has served military aviation since 1941, and commercial aviation since 1947. We have seen how Bradley Field got started, and how it has changed and grown with the times. It has helped Windsor Locks grow and prosper, and it has put Windsor Locks on the map.

Sources:

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<https://www.nytimes.com/1976/12/23/archives/bradley-field-people-mover-a-casualty-of-overoptimism.html>

Bradley Field's Military Origins

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Flight Insurance Vending Machine

<https://airandspace.si.edu/multimedia-gallery/14310hjpg>

What Airplane Food Looked Like Through the Decades,

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/airlines-airports/old-airline-meals>

Connecticut Trolley Museum

<http://www.hopetunnel.org/subway/wh/>

Bradley Field

<http://www.bradleyairport.com/>

Bradley Field enters the Jet Age

<https://connecticuthistory.org/bradley-field-enters-the-jet-age/>

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<https://www.sacbee.com/entertainment/living/travel/article2608655.html>

Chapter 5

Old Ads from the *Windsor Locks Journal*

Changes in history (styles, costs, technology, salesmanship) can be seen by scanning advertisements in newspapers over the decades. Here is a series of ads from the *Windsor Locks Journal* from 1901 to 1958. Note the ads for medicines. In the early days, the medicine makers were not tightly controlled and their claims seem absurd. Also, look at the prices, which seem quite low.

DOCTORS
say "Consumption can be cured."
Nature alone won't do it. It needs
help. Doctors say
"Scott's Emulsion
is the best help." But you must
continue its use even in hot
weather.
If you have not tried it, send for free sample.
SCOTT & BOWNE, Chemists,
409-415 Pearl Street, New York,
50c and \$1.00; all druggists.

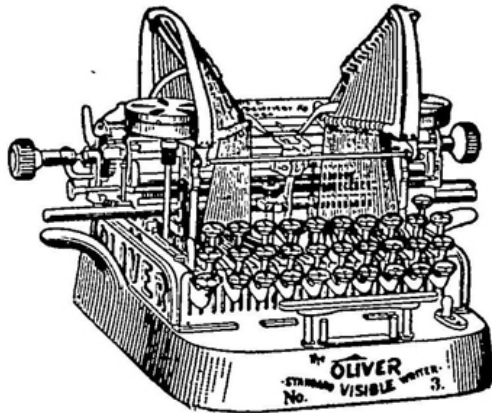
Aug. 30, 1901

Hump Back
SCOTT'S EMULSION won't make a
hump back straight, neither will it make
a short leg long, but it feeds soft bone
and heals diseased bone and is among
the few genuine means of recovery in
rickets and bone consumption.
Send for free sample.
SCOTT & BOWNE, Chemists,
409-415 Pearl Street, New York.
50c. and \$1.00; all druggists.

Aug. 3, 1906

The Oliver Typewriter

Standard Visible Typewriter.



The perfection of simplicity and durability. It writes in sight. There is no carriage to lift; no constructional parts to peer over. Your work is **THERE RIGHT BEFORE YOU.**

Special terms of purchase on installments can be arranged.

LEON WILCOX,

Windsor Locks, Conn.

Aug. 3, 1906

One of the Many Styles of



SUMMER SHIRT WAISTS

to be found in our varied assortment. There are others. Come and see them

Also a Nice Line of

Shirt Waist Suits:

J. D. OUTERSON,

WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

Aug. 3, 1906

PRESENT THIS AD. AND YOUR CARFARE WILL BE ALLOWED.

NO PAIN

\$5 Full Set



Dr. Thos. Jefferson King
Dr. King's "Natural Gum"
sets of teeth absolutely defy
detection.
Gold Fillings, \$1; others, 50c.

DR. T. J. KING,

101 Main St., 322½ Main St.,
Hartford. Springfield.

Hours 9 a. m. to 6 p. m.
Saturdays until 9 p. m.
Sundays 10 a. m. to 2 p. m.
Telephone Connection.

My \$8 sets are the most lifelike and finest fitting plates that dental science can procure. Unless you require a special plate, \$8 is all you need pay in this office for the best set. I have the reputation of making the most natural looking, the finest fitting and the best wearing teeth. No set ever leaves my office until the patron is perfectly satisfied as to fit and appearance. I give our personal guarantee FOR 10 YEARS with each set.

Lady Attendant—Take Elevator.



\$5

This is the only office in the city where GOLD CROWNS and teeth without plates (undetachable from natural ones) are inserted positively without pain.

PAINLESS EXTRACTION FREE.

Nov. 1, 1912

Subscribe For
**The
Journal**

**\$1.50 per Year,
\$1.25 if paid strictly
In Advance.**

Feb. 26, 1909

**Preventatives
and Cures
For Hoarseness
and Colds**

Bronchial Lozenges
For Throat Irritations.

White Pine and Tar
For the Lungs.

H. N. LEBELL,

BIDWELL BLOCK,

Main St., Windsor Locks.

Dec. 29, 1911

J. E. MOONEY,

Plumbing.

Heating.

Roofing.

Beds and Bedding.

COR. OAK AND CENTER STS.

Telephone, 265-3. (Private Wire.)

WINDSOR LOCKS.

UNDERTAKING.

Funeral arrangements attended to.

Embalming and details properly done.

Windsor Locks Journal, 8-22-1913

Cure That Cough!

Try some of these remedies:

**Syrup of Tar,
with Extract of
Cod Liver Oil and
Menthol.**

Used by Medical Specialists as a treatment for Colds, Bronchitis, Croup and Coughs of all kinds.

**Flaxseed, Menthol and
Wild Cherry Cough
Syrup**

For La Grippe and Whooping Coughs, Bronchial affections and general throat irritations. Stimulates the mucous membrane and looses the phlegm

REGISTERED **R. J. Keefe**
PHARMACIST.
WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

Nov. 21, 1924

IN

New York City

ROOMS WITH BATH

SINGLE \$2.50
from

DOUBLE \$3.50
from

Rooms with running water.
Single from \$2.00 • Double from
\$3.00 • Special weekly rates.

Two Air-Conditioned Restaurants
Thos. J. Kelly, Manager

Woodstock

127 WEST 43rd ST.
at Times Square

Jan. 21, 1943

Meat and Grocery Money Savers for Saturday!

Rib-end Pork Chops.....20c lb
Smoked Shoulders.....15c lb
Sausage Meat.....23c lb
Spare Ribs.....15c lb
Sauer Kraut.....3 lbs 23c
Hamburg.....18c lb
Shoulder Steak.....30c lb
Thick Rib Corned Beef.....12c lb
Lamb Stew.....2 lbs 25c
Veal Stew.....15c lb
Lamb Patties.....23c lb
Pot Roast.....25-30c lb
Baby Beef Liver.....15c lb

Boiling Beef.....12c lb
Prime Roast Beef.....30c lb
Land O' Lake Fowl.....27c lb
Brookfield Butter.....36c lb
Sugar, cloth bags.....10 lbs 49c
Octagon Soap.....2 bars 9c
Ivory Soap.....5c bar
Prudence Hash.....23c can
Forest Park Tomatoes
2 cans 25c
Heinz Soup.....2 cans 25c
Bisquick.....31c pkg.
Eagle Sardines.....6 cans 25c

Forest Park Red Salmon 19c can
Molasses.....29c qt. bottle
Cocoa.....2 lb can 22c
Babo.....2 cans 25c
Newgate Ginger Ale
2 bottles 25c
Prune Juice.....22c qt. bottle
Noxon Silver Polish
22c bottle
Pineapple Juice.....10c can
Downyflake Doughnuts
20c doz.

SISITZKY'S MARKET
THE STORE OF QUALITY & SERVICE
DELIVERY SERVICE 112 MAIN ST. PHONE 645 WINDSOR LOCKS

Jan. 18, 1935

D. F. LaRUSSA
BASEMENT SPECIAL!
SNOW CAP TIRES
 6.00 x .16
\$8.95
 With Old Tire
D. F. LaRUSSA
 170 Main Street Tel. 1083 Windsor Locks

Jan. 17, 1952

Bottle Shop Specials

WHISKEY

Good Old Guckenheimer

Full Fifth	-	-	\$3.33
Full Pint	-	-	\$2.19
Full ½ Pint	-	-	\$1.10

WILKEN FAMILY

Full Fifth	-	-	\$3.43
Full Pint	-	-	\$2.19
Full ½ Pint	-	-	\$1.13

GIN

Bottle Shop, full fifth	-	\$2.98
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BEER

Holland, Contents

24 Bottle Case	-	-	\$2.44
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Ballantine, Ruppert, Hampden
Schaeffer

\$3.07 Case Contents

WINE

Bottle Shop Muscatel, Port, Sherry

Full Fifth	-	-	59c
½ Gallon	-	-	\$1.35
Full Gallon	-	-	\$2.59

ICE BOX COCKTAILS

Manhattan, fifth	-	-	\$1.96
Martini, fifth	-	-	\$1.96

BOTTLE SHOP

Opposite Railroad Station

Windsor Locks

Jan. 17, 1952

King's Men's Sets.....	\$1 up
* Seaforth Sets.....	\$1 up
*Max Factor for Men.....	\$1 up
Electrical Train, 11 pc. set.....	\$1.49
Ronson Duchess Electric Razor.....	\$8.88
Electric Mixer.....	\$8.88
*Little Lady.....	60c up
Angelique Sray Cologne.....	\$1.95
Red Satin, Pink Satin—Reg. \$3	
*Rubenstein Set.....	\$2.50 up
*Lentheric Sets.....	\$1 up
*Coty Sets.....	\$2 up
*Lanvin Gift Sets.....	\$5 up

* Plus Federal Tax

• • •

Amity Pocketbooks.....	\$3.95 up
Men's and Women's	
Christmas Tree Lights, 7 bulb string	\$1.19
(If one goes out, rest stay lit)	
Christmas Stockings.....	\$1.88
(Regular \$2.98)	
Christmas Lamps.....	5 for 23c up
White Tissue Cut Box, 125 ft.	49c
(20 In. Wide, Reg. 69c)	
Hallmark Cards and Gift Wrap	
Ladies' Stockings, box 3 pair.....	\$2.34
(First Grade Dupont)	
Cigars, Christmas Wrap.....	98c
Vello-Bole Pipes.....	\$1.50
Cigarettes	\$1.90 carton
Stratford Flash Camera Set.....	\$3.98 up
Cameras, Film, Flash Bulbs	

Come In And Sign Up
For Free Hostess Serving Wagon
 With Gold-Trimmed Carape Set and Oven Proof
 Casserole With Hi-Style Table Warmer

Candy Cupboard Schrafft's Nuts
Hot Nestles Cocoa—7 Cents
STOP REST RELAX

Charland's Pharmacy

"Your Family Drug Store"
 74 MAIN ST. WINDSOR LOCKS
 Telephone NA 3-3047

Dec. 18, 1958

FIRST NATIONAL STORES

5 Chestnut Street

Windsor Locks, Conn.

OVER 1800 STORES IN NEW ENGLAND

CAMPBELL'S BEANS	3 CANS	25c
PRIZE BREAD	20 OZ. LOAF	8c
PURE LARD	CUT FROM TUB	15c
BACON	GENUINE SUGAR CURED	32c Lb.
PALMOLIVE SOAP	4 Bars	25c
RINSO	RINSES CLOTHES CLEAN	Lg. Pkg. 19c
PEAS	UNIFORM QUALITY HIGH GRADE	3 Cans 32c
STRING BEANS	GREEN CUT	3 Cans 32c
PEACHES	GOLDEN HALVES	3 Cans 50c
FINAST PRUNES	2 Lb. Pkg.	19c
GOOD LUCK	PIE FILLING	Pkg. 10c
CIGARETTES	ALL KINDS	2 PKGS. 25c
CANDY	ALL 5c POPULAR BRAND	3 FOR 10c

Dec. 18, 1958

Chapter 6

Main Street During Redevelopment: 1965-1975

From 1965 to 1975, Windsor Locks underwent the Main Street Redevelopment program. During that time, the town used Federal funds for rebuilding blighted neighborhoods to buy and demolish the retail business buildings along Main Street. The plan stated that new businesses would replace the buildings and businesses that had been torn down. The program was liked by some and disliked by others. Main Street was lined on one side with retail businesses which included a hotel, banks, restaurants, bakeries, clothiers, bars, shoe shops, barber shops, supermarkets and small food markets, a theater, a bowling alley and more. The other side of the street had the canal and a line of manufacturing businesses which had been the town's largest source of employment. This downtown area had been the center of Windsor Locks social life, shopping life, and business life.



Main St. before and after redevelopment

Main Street had long been a bustling area. Up until the 1950s, almost all of the population of the town lived between Main Street and West Street. Given the small area in which most Windsor Locks citizens lived, many walked to Main Street to do their shopping. Going to the A&P for groceries also meant meeting

and talking to friends and relatives. The upper photo in the above collage graphically shows the nature of the bustling Main Street.

However, that is not the whole story. Those buildings were built in the 1800s and early 1900s, and they were aging. There had been a number of fires. By the 1960s, few would argue that a degree of blight had settled in. When the town government of Windsor Locks found that there was Federal money available, they went after it. The Marconi brothers fought the proposal longer and harder than anyone else, but eventually they gave in.

In the 1960s, the buildings that housed the retail businesses along Main Street were bought by the town, and in the ensuing decade, they were demolished to make way for the new businesses which the town government promised would move in. The bottom photo of the above collage shows what happened. New businesses did not move in, as had been promised.

The purpose of this article is not to debate whether the redevelopment plan was the right or wrong thing to do, or to lay blame. The purpose is to take a look at Main Street during the process of shutting down the old businesses and demolishing the buildings. No matter what side you were on, it was a sad sight to see and a difficult time to live through. Since the late 1800s, Main Street is where Windsor Locks citizens did their shopping, and it was the place where people came from other towns to do their shopping. Then in a short time, all of those businesses were shuttered, and demolished. The owners of those businesses were known by all. Windsor Locks was and is a small town. Their names were: Marconi, Bidwell, Sasali, Colapietro, Goldfarb, Bianchi, LaRussa, etc, and of course, Sid, the owner of the Modern Drug Store.

What happened to Main Street was a bit more complex than that. Windsor Locks and the rest of the United States were already involved in other changes. Most manufacturing businesses were moving overseas, as the US moved from the manufacturing industry to the service industry. The mills along the canal were on a steep downhill slide. By 1970, only a few were left. Also, Windsor Locks was undergoing a change in its population center as well as its major employers. Bradley Field had just become a civilian airport and businesses were starting up to support the people using the airport. Restaurants, hotels, parking services and more were being built near Bradley Field. Hamilton Standard, Kaman Aircraft and other companies were moving into land near the airport and they were becoming the main employers in the town. The town population was increasing in the 1950s and 60s to fill those jobs, and the land between West Street and Bradley Field changed from agricultural to housing in two decades. Main Street not only lost its business center, but at the same time, it lost its position as the “center” of the town.

Keep these things in mind as you look at the photographs of the Main Street buildings at the time when they had been shuttered, and were being demolished.

Below are photos of the Main Street businesses between 1965 and 1975.



**Lillian's Shop (boarded) and Donut Kettle
Ready for demolition**



**Lillian's Shop and Donut Kettle
during earlier and better times**



.Sid's Modern Drug, ready for demolition



Sid's Modern Drug, in better times

Below are four photographs of the Rialto Theater and Swede's Jewelers during the demolition process. You can also see Dr. Gottesman's office. He was an optometrist, in the white downstairs office to the left of the Rialto Theater. Beyond Dr. Gottesman's office is the Donut Kettle, with the red Seal-test sign



The next two photos are of the back of the Rialto Theater.



The next photo is of Bianchi's Shoe Store and Tony's Soda Shoppe, which are on the ground floor of Coly's Hotel, which was also known as the Windsor Locks Hotel. To the right of that, just past the driveway is Sy Bianchi's news stand followed by Bianchi's Bar and Restaurant. To the right of that is Shonty's Bar and Grille. All had been sold to the town. You can see "For Rent" signs in the two stores under the hotel, but no one was about to rent a store that would be demolished shortly. This photo was taken in 1970. The buildings were torn down a few years after that.



Left - Coly's Hotel. Ground floor L to R is Bianchi's Shoe Store, Tony's Soda Shop. Then, Sy Bianchi's News Stand, Bianchi's Restaurant, with Moses Goldfarb's apartments above, then Shonty's

Below is a photo of the driveway between Coly's Hotel and Sy Bianchi's News Stand. Mid Town Motors can be seen at the top of the driveway. This photo was taken in about 1971, after all of the buildings had been sold to the town. Most of the businesses had already closed, and the buildings were left to deteriorate. The photo seems to indicate that Mid Town motors was still operating. The condition of brick veneer on Sy's News Stand and on the hotel are in terrible shape, as is the driveway.



Driveway between Colapietro's Hotel and Sy Bianchi's News Stand. Midtown Motors at top. 1971, after the hotel, and the news stand had closed for Main Street "redevelopment"

The following two photos are from the *Journal Inquirer* of Feb. 19, 1975.





Herbert Staiger, Feb 15, 1975

The *Journal Inquirer* headline for the above photo was "Sidewalk Supt." The paragraph read: "Herbert Staiger of Windsor Locks is retired and freely admits: 'I do not have much to do.' Living across the street from the downtown urban renewal project gives him his greatest daytime entertainment." The photo below is from the same article.

Conclusion

The canal was finished in 1829. Windsor Locks was founded in 1854. Main Street, with its long row of retail businesses had been the center of business and social life of the town of Windsor Locks from the time the settlement grew up along the canal. It remained the bustling center of town until the Main Street Redevelopment program (1965-1975). Going through those ten years of massive change was not easy on the townspeople, especially those who lived between Main Street and West Street. The photographs presented here are a powerful reminder of what happened in Main Street Redevelopment program.

Sources

Photos from the collection of Frank Baron

Photos from Leo and Lena Colapietro

Journal Inquirer of Feb. 19, 1975.

Chapter 7

The J. R. Montgomery Co. and its Buildings

J. R. Montgomery founded one of the largest and most successful businesses in Windsor Locks. While no photograph of him could be obtained, a short biography of the man was found in *Men of Mark in Connecticut*, which was published in 1906. It states:

John Robert Montgomery was born in Great Barrington, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, February 24, 1845. The family is of Scottish origin, the American branch of it being founded at Salisbury, Connecticut, early in the history of this country. His father, John Milton Montgomery was a farmer, and later, a railroad man.

He attended, whenever possible, the district schools of the county, and later the Drury Academy at North Adams, Massachusetts.

At the age of sixteen Mr. Montgomery began the active work of life as an operative in a cotton mill at Great Barrington. Six years later, his ability and faithfulness made him superintendent of this mill, and in four more years he was proprietor of a cotton mill in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Since 1890, Mr. Montgomery has been president of the J. R. Montgomery Company in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. He is respected by his fellow citizens for his integrity and fidelity. He believes that "the way for a young man to succeed is by having some definite object in life and sticking to it."

Mr. Montgomery is a Republican and has never voted any other ticket. He finds his recreation in out-of-door exercises and in reading, caring most for books of fiction and poetry. He has been married twice, the first time on May 28, 1867, to Maria Holden, and the second, on September 23, 1880, to Frances Wills Meeks. Four children have been born to him, none of whom are living.

In 1871, J. R. Montgomery came to Windsor Locks from Housatonic, MA and founded a company to manufacture "cotton warps" for the making of "satinets" and "union cassimeres".

A cotton warp is cotton yarn which was made to be used in the weaving of yarn into cloth. Satinet is a cotton cloth which has a smooth, silky feel and look. Union cassimere is cloth that is made with cotton yarn going in one direction and wool yarn going in the other. The main use for cotton warp was in the manufacture of satinet and union cassimeres.

When he started “J. R. Montgomery & Company” in 1871, he had two partners. The steps in going from raw cotton to cotton warp included: cleaning, carding, combing, drawing and spinning. At first, Mr. Montgomery bought cotton that was already dyed. Soon, he started to dye his own product in a part of the mill that was then owned by A. Dunham & Son.

In 1876, Montgomery became the first company in the United States to manufacture what were called “novelty yarns”. They were made of threads of cotton, silk, wool and other fibers, which were twisted in intricate ways to produce novel effects. In modern times, if someone says: “This is a novelty item.” they mean that while it is something new, it is not a serious item. For instance, one might say, “A hula hoop is a novelty item”. In the late 1800s, the term “novelty yarns” meant the newest styles of yarn and the highest quality. These yarns were designed to copy the styles of yarn that were being produced in Europe. At that time, Europe was the fashion leader. Formerly, these “novelty yarns” could only be had in the United States by importing them from Europe. The novelty yarns became very popular, and business was good. By 1891, the Montgomery firm had grown from only a few to 200 employees.

In 1880, Mr. Montgomery purchased all of the property that he was using. He also bought and adapted machinery to manufacture all kinds of plain and fancy warps. At this point, he had two mills making cotton warps.

In 1885, J. R. Montgomery took on his brother, George M. Montgomery, as a partner. Originally, J. R. Montgomery had two partners, and the company was called “J. R. Montgomery & Company”. He bought out the two original partners, and changed the name to the “J. R. Montgomery Company.” The change in name was small. The “&” was dropped. J. R. and George were the active managers of the company. A new cotton warp mill and an addition to the novelty yarn mill were built. At that time, \$950,000 was invested in enlarging the scope of the business. That was the equivalent of \$30 Million dollars in 2019 dollars. That was a massive infusion of new money.

In 1887, the company built a large dye-house, and equipped it with modern, improved machinery. They bought their cotton by the bale and sold their finished product in lots of 15,000 cotton spindles. A spindle held yarn much like a spool holds thread. These spindles of yarn were sold throughout New England states and the West.

In the late 1880s, the J. R. Montgomery Company figured out how to make metals such as gold, silver and copper into long thin, narrow strips, which was called “tinsel”. They developed methods of mixing these metal tinsels with cotton and other types of yarns, which really made the resulting cloth stand out. Their novelty yarns, including the ones with metal tinsel were used in making dresses, upholstery, drapery and other things.

In 1896, they introduced mercerized cotton yarn. This process produced a high luster and a silky feel to the yarn. The process of mercerization had been developed previously by an English dyer. However, the J. R. Montgomery

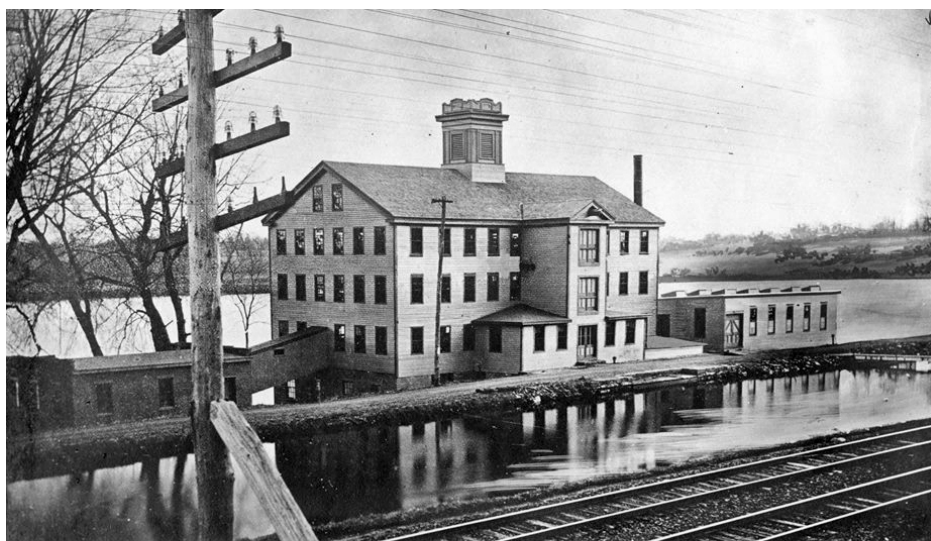
Company recognized the value that mercerization added, and the resulting yarns turned out to be very popular.

The *History of American Textiles*, which was published in 1922, described the wide variety of yarns being manufactured by the J. R. Montgomery Co.

“The products of their novelty yarn mills are of extraordinary diversity, exhibiting a wealth of contrasting materials and permitting the attainment of novel dress effects. Yarns of innumerable kinds of fiber of gold, silver and copper tinsel, chemicals, compounds, glass, etc., made up in knotted, loop, flake, bunch, spiral and spec yarns, also as brilliants, boucle, metal cords, and electric thread, in whatever forms that the trade desires.

The J. R. Montgomery Company was the first in the United States to make tinsels and is the only concern of any importance in America now engaged in that line of manufacture. Every possible means has been employed toward improvement of method and perfection of results. A large part of the machinery used in the mills had to be especially adapted to its purposes, such adaptation calling for quite as much mechanical ingenuity and inventive skill as the designing of an entirely new machine. A mechanical laboratory is maintained where every phase of the process of manufacture is constantly studied, and numerous experiments are made with the object of increasing the efficiency of the plant, both as to quantity and quality of the product.”

The J. R. Montgomery Company was doing very well. Here are some photos of their early buildings. The first is a photo of their buildings in 1871.



First photo of Montgomery buildings - 1871

Next is a photo of Montgomery's Warp Mill 1 in 1895. Warp Mill 1 is the five story building in the middle of the photo.



J.R.Montgomery Buildings 1895

The *History of American Textiles* had this 1901 photograph of J. R. Montgomery's Novelty Mills 1 and 2.



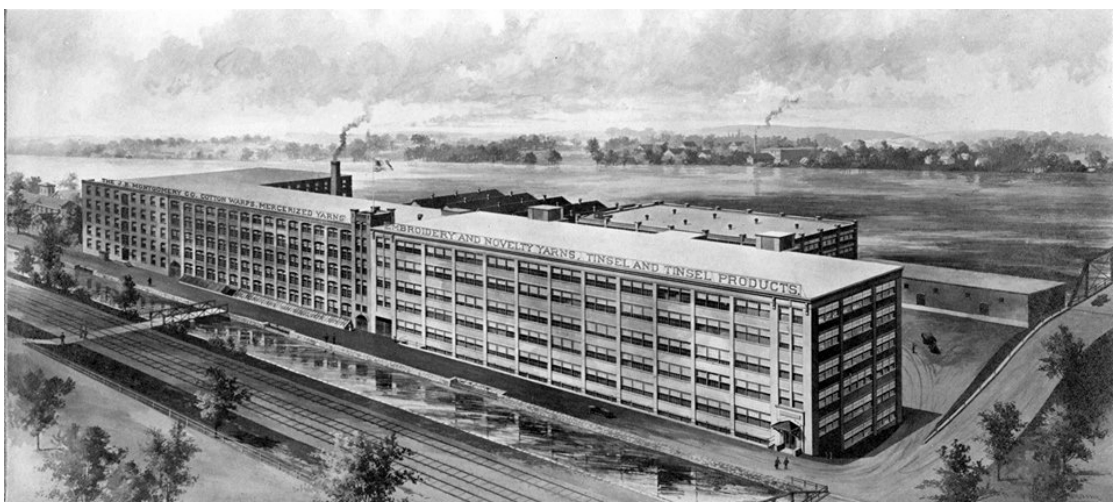
J.R. Montgomery Co. Novelty Mills 1 and 2 - 1901

Below is a 1905 photo of Montgomery's Warp Mills 1 and 2. Notice that the sign on top of the building says: "The J. R. Montgomery Co. Cotton warps, mercerized yarns".

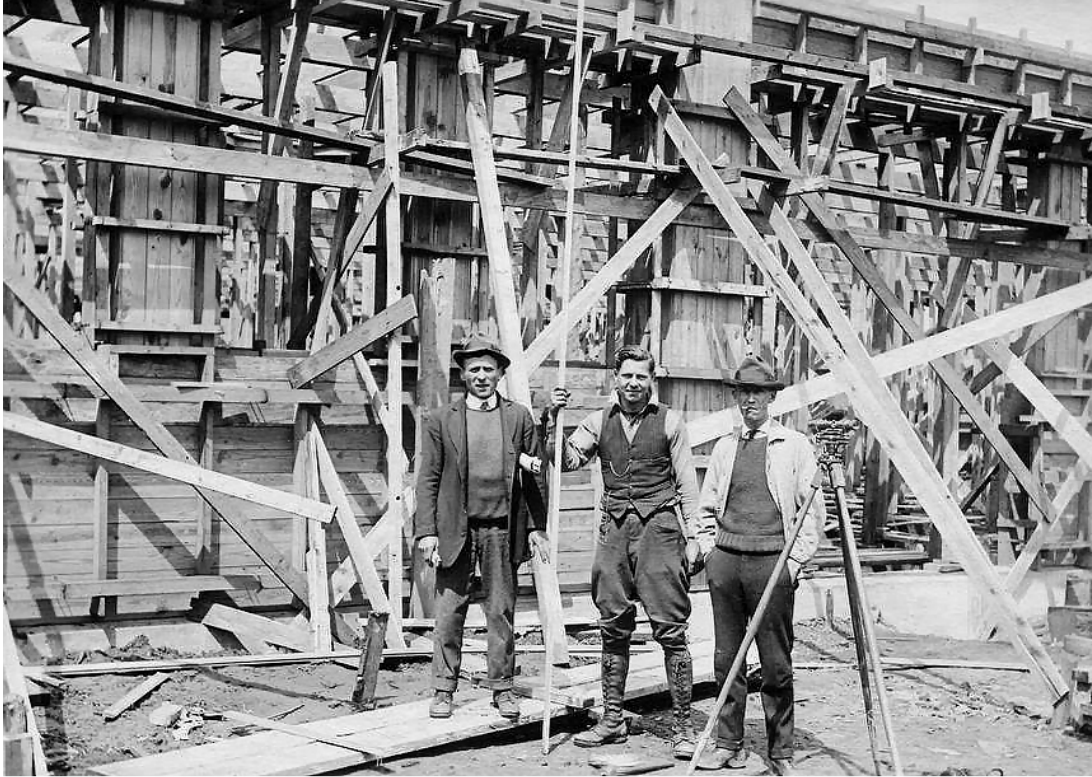


J.R.Montgomery Warp Mills 1 & 2 1905

In the years leading up to World War I, there was a need for Montgomery's tinsels for use in electrical devices. These included both metallic threads and the cords which were used on telephone switchboards. The need was so great, that they built a large white concrete building. It can be seen in the drawing (below) of the building complex in 1921. That photograph is followed by a photo of men working on the construction of that building.



Drawing of Montgomery complex 1921



Construction of Montgomery building in 1921

We have covered the first half-century of the J. R. Montgomery Company, which is the period from 1871 to 1921. The booklet, *The Story Of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954*, provides a good history of the company during its next thirty years, from 1921 to 1951.

In 1922, the J. R. Montgomery Company's metallic tinsel began to be used for radio cords. At first, they provided electric cords to the radio industry and later to the television industry. Their products were used in: electric razors, hearing aids, radar, electric blankets, walkie-talkies, and more. The field of flexible electric cords was booming.

In the 1930s, Montgomery got into the manufacturing and marketing of Christmas garlands, and decorative ribbons which were made from their "lamé" product. Lamé is a type of fabric woven or knit from thin ribbons of metallic fiber, which is usually of a gold or silver color.

Around 1937, there was a downturn in the cotton warp business in the United States. The demand had diminished. The Great Depression was hard on all industries, but the Montgomery Company survived it. World War II had greatly increased the need for metallic tinsels and cords. At the end of the war, the television industry grew at a fast pace, and the demand for electrical tinsels and cords greatly increased.

The company developed a type of metallic product that did not tarnish, which went by the trade name of NEVA-TARN.

In 1952, the company developed a silver plated round copper wire which was silver-plated.

In 1953, they developed a yarn made from aluminum foil, which was used in decorative ribbons, where the round wire was not suitable.

In 1954, *The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954* concluded that the future looked bright for the J. R. Montgomery Company.

Below is a photo of the Montgomery buildings in 1935.



Montgomery buildings in 1935. The white reinforced concrete building was added to the two warp mills in 1920

The booklet *Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954* was published for the 1954 celebration of the town's first centennial. In 1976, the town published *The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1976*, which was for the celebration of the Bicentennial of the United States. It had the same format as the previous booklet, and it had a section on the J. R. Montgomery Company. That section repeated much of the information in the previous booklet, but it had no information on the Company in the intervening 22 years. Because the very nature of the two booklets was very upbeat, and because the previous writeup on the Montgomery Company was so long and so positive, the lack of new information on the Company was surprising. In the previous booklet, we did see that while the electric tinsel part of the company's business was flourishing, the cotton yarn business had ended. One had to surmise that things were not going well for the Company.

Below is a photo of the Montgomery buildings in 1976.



J.R.Montgomery building 1976

No information about the Montgomery Company could be found in the 1970-1987 timeframe. Then the following article was discovered.

The April 28, 1988 issue of the *Springfield Union-News* had an article on the front page stating that the J. P. Montgomery Company is moving its wire-making operation from Windsor Locks to Littleton, New Hampshire in October 1988, and will take 125 jobs with it. Company officials said that the reason for the move is that the company cannot find enough workers in the Windsor Locks area to fill their orders. The Littleton factory was being built at that time, and it is near another Montgomery plant, which is located in Lisbon, NH. The official said that all production and administrative staff positions are being moved. Windsor Locks Selectman Edward Ferrari said that he was not surprised by the move, and that the move would not affect Windsor Locks' booming economy.

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation provides more information on the move the Montgomery Company to New Hampshire. It said: "By the late 1980s, the firm was no longer competitive in its Windsor Locks location, and was sold to German investors who moved operations to a new factory in New Hampshire." The Montgomery company ceased to exist in 1989. This article had some other interesting background information. They said that the company's largest workforce was 500, which happened in 1920. They also provided a brief description of the buildings in the Montgomery complex, saying:

“The complex is composed of three main buildings: the oldest at the northern end is a 5-story brick building dating to c.1893; at the center is a c.1904 5-story brick building; and the southernmost building is reinforced concrete constructed c.1920. A two-story reinforced concrete outbuilding sits along the river side, and a 1939 single-story brick addition is to the rear of the central mill.”

(*Mills: Making Places of America*, The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation)

Coping with the Connecticut River Floods

A major challenge that faced the J. R. Montgomery Company during its 120 year existence was to cope with Connecticut River floods. Let's take a look at how often the floods came along. The following chart shows the floods of the Connecticut River near Hartford from the 1600s to 1962. This gives us an idea of how frequently the area flooded. It shows the water heights for both Hartford and Springfield for 17 floods over three centuries. It is interesting to note that an entire century went by with no floods. While there were no floods in the 1700s, there were eight in the 1800s.

HISTORICAL FLOODS IN NEW ENGLAND

M85

CONNECTICUT RIVER IN MASSACHUSETTS AND CONNECTICUT (MARCH)

Year ¹	Holyoke, Mass.		Springfield, Mass.		Hartford, Conn.	
	Date	Stage (feet)	Date	Stage (feet)	Date	Stage (feet)
1683.....					July-Aug.....	26.0
1692.....					Feb.-Mar.....	26.2
1801.....			Mar. 20.....	21.7	Mar. 20.....	27.5
1841.....					Jan. 9.....	26.3
1843.....					Mar. 29.....	27.2
1854.....	May 1.....	10.5	May 1.....	22.3	May 1.....	29.8
1859.....			Mar. 20.....	20.5	Mar. 20.....	26.4
1862.....	Apr. 20.....	12.5	Apr. 20.....	22.2	Apr. 21.....	28.7
1869.....	Apr. 22.....	11.2	Apr. 21.....	21.0	Apr. 23.....	26.7
1869.....	Oct. 5.....	12.7	Oct. 4.....	21.5	Oct. 6.....	26.3
1901.....	Apr. 8.....	11.4	Apr. 9.....	19.8	Apr. 9.....	26.4
1913.....	Mar. 29.....	12.0	Mar. 29.....	20.2	Mar. 29.....	26.3
1927.....	Nov. 5.....	14.8	Nov. 6.....	22.4	Nov. 6.....	29.0
1933.....	Apr. 20.....	12.4	Apr. 20.....	19.9	Apr. 21.....	26.0
1936.....	Mar. 19-20.....	16.8	Mar. 20.....	28.6	Mar. 21.....	37.6
1938.....	Sept. 22.....	14.9	Sept. 22.....	25.8	Sept. 23.....	35.4
1955.....					Aug. 20.....	30.6

¹ Data for 1683-1936, Grover (1937, p. 453-455); 1938, Bernard (1941, p. 24, 25); 1955, Reichelderfer (1955, p. 27).

The J. R. Montgomery complex was on a flood plane in Windsor Locks. It is listed as a “100 year flood plane.” The above chart shows that was a gross underestimate.

All of the manufacturing plants along the canal in Windsor Locks had to cope with these frequent floods. They didn’t have any choice. They did it by developing “contingency plans”. Equipment that should not be underwater was put on upper floors. When a flood is expected, there are usually a number of days to prepare for it. Each of the mills had a list of things to do in preparation for a flood.

Below are photos of the Montgomery plants during two of these floods.

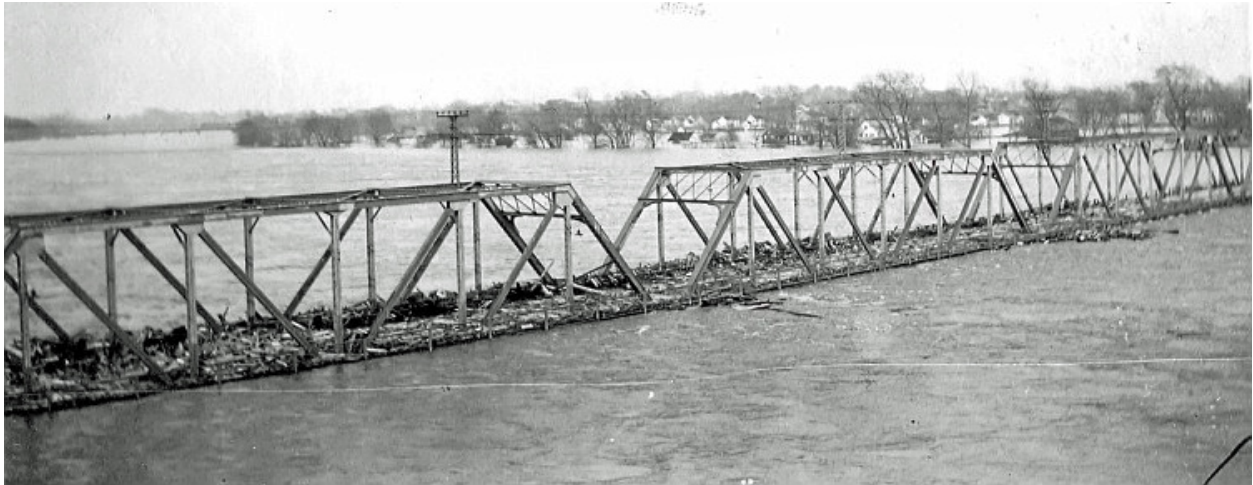


Montgomery building during 1936 flood



Windsor Locks, Connecticut, after 1938 hurricane.

The water went over the bridge road in both the 1936 and 1938 floods.

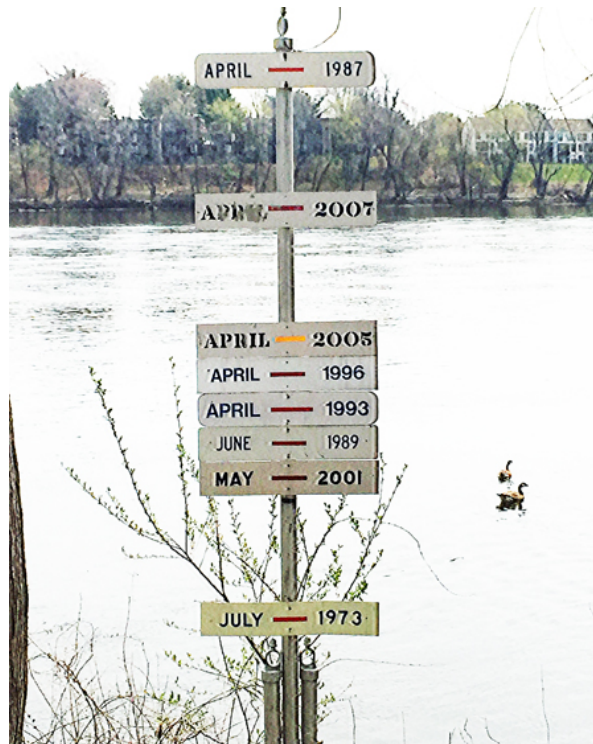


Windsor Locks Bridge during 1936 flood

On River Road in Windsor Locks, there are two sign posts with the dates and heights of recent floods. The taller one shows the higher floods. The signs offer an excellent reminder of reality. The first photo shows the tall sign, with the shorter sign in the background.



Below is the short flood height sign, which shows the heights of the lesser floods.



It was not only the J. R. Montgomery Company, but all of the businesses between the Connecticut River and the Enfield Canal which had to cope with them. It took planning and hard work to do that, but they proved it was possible, not only to exist, but to survive and thrive in the Windsor Locks flood plane.

Conclusion (The J. R. Montgomery Company)

The J. R. Montgomery Company was an aggressive, innovative organization. They sought to make the latest fashions in yarns, and to make them be of the highest quality. They continually innovated and brought new items to market. They survived through two world wars, the Great Depression and a continuing series of floods. By the 1950s, the market for their yarns had collapsed, and manufacturing in the United States was in a significant downturn. The US economy was moving from manufacturing to service. In the late 1980s, the company was sold, and the buyer moved the operation to New Hampshire.

The J. R. Montgomery Company had been one of the largest companies and largest employers in Windsor Locks. They thrived for most of their century of existence. They were an excellent example of “Yankee ingenuity, drive and perseverance”.

The Montgomery buildings after the Montgomery Co. sold them

The rest of this article has nothing to do with the J. R. Montgomery Company. It is a photo essay on what has happened to those buildings after the Montgomery Company sold them. Because the buildings were not in use, and there were no real plans to do anything with them, they were subject to fire and deterioration. It is important is to be able to remember the major fire and the scope of the deterioration that occurred. The reason to know the history of these buildings is that same as for learning any history. It is so that we are better able to avoid old errors. Since floods will certainly continue, we will find out how well people and businesses in the flood plane cope with them, and what the town does to help.

The Fires

The J. R. Montgomery Company did not suffer major fires during its life, but there were three fires in the building after the company left it. The “Historic Buildings of Connecticut” website says that the fires happened in 2006, 2009 and 2011. All of these were after the company was sold. The company had moved out of the building in 1989. (*Historic Buildings of Connecticut*)

The big fire happened in 2006. Fire trucks were not allowed to go down to the small road by the factory because they are not allowed to go on a road on which they cannot turn around. They had to shoot water to the fire, from fire trucks parked on Main Street. Following are photos of that fire.



J.R.Montgomery factory fire, July 2006



Montgomery factory fire 2006



Montgomery fire 2006



Shell of Montgomery plant after fire

The Montgomery buildings in state of deep deterioration

After the J. R. Montgomery Company sold the company, the buildings began to deteriorate. As time went on, the deterioration became an eyesore. The following photos are illustrative.







Montgomery Buildings to be rebuilt as an apartment complex

The following photo is from 2018 and shows the initial step in rebuilding the Montgomery buildings as an apartment house.



Montgomery buildings start to be rebuilt 2018

The following is the design for the apartment complex.



Montgomery buildings to become apartments

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Chapter 8

Riverside Park and Windsor Locks

Windsor Locks residents had a long love affair with Riverside Park from its earliest days until it became “Six Flags New England” in the mid 1990s. Like all long-lived relationships, the details changed over time, but the relationship endured. Riverside Park was a nearby place for Windsor Locks residents to go and have fun, bowl, roller skate, dance, walk the midway, or see a stock car race for a small price.



Riverside Park, Agawam, Mass.

This article is not a history of Riverside Park. David Cecchi wrote a book-length history of the Park. (Images of America: Riverside Park, by David Cecchi, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2011) It was the result of years of research. It details the history of the place from its origins as Gallup's Grove in 1870, through changes of ownership, up to its complete rebirth as Six Flags New England in the mid 1990s. It is filled with photos and written history and provides insight as to the reasons for each change, and into the personalities of those who led it during each step of its evolution.

The focus here is in the relationship of Riverside Park to the residents of Windsor Locks. Riverside Grove became Riverside Park in 1912. At that time it really began to introduce rides and become what we know as an amusement park. At the beginning of the 1900s, Windsor Locks was in the midst of a large influx of immigrants from Europe, who flocked to Windsor Locks because it had what they needed — jobs for unskilled workers in the mills by the canal. The arriving immigrants often arrived with no money and not speaking English. At

that point, they weren't thinking about going to an amusement park. They were hard pressed to start a new life in a new country.

Many of the immigrants were relatives of others who had already arrived, and who had sent money for them to make the journey. When they got here, they were given work by their relatives as well as a place to stay while they could get settled. My maternal grandparents, Vito and Anna Colapietro, arrived in 1910. They had five children. All went to college and all were pushed by their parents to "become Americans". Their sons were told "No mustaches. No cigars." All of their children were told: "Speak English. Don't get into trouble. Get an education."

By the time the children of the immigrants were teenagers, trips to Riverside Park were common. Riverside Park had a ballroom and a roller skating rink, that drew crowds. Going to Riverside Park in a group and roller skating for the evening or on a weekend day, was inexpensive and fun. Hitchhiking could get you there at no cost. If you could find someone with a car, parking was free. It was only about seven miles away, but in reality it was "worlds apart" from Windsor Locks.

How much did it cost to have a good time back then? In 1917, a two story building on lower Grove St, near Main Street, was refurbished to house the Palace Theater on the top floor, and a bowling alley on the bottom floor. Later this building was known as "Blanche's Bowling Alley". My father, Leo Montemerlo, said that when he was a youngster (he was born in 1915), he could go to the Palace Theater, see a movie and get a lollypop for seven cents. So what did it cost at Riverside Park? Page 39 of David Cecchi's book has an ad for Riverside Park's "Red Letter Days" from the 1920s, at which children were admitted for three cents a day! In 1917, you could go swimming in Riverside Park's big, new pool. The cost to rent a "sterilized bathing suit" and a towel was 25 cents. (Cecchi, 2011)

It is interesting to note that the two oldest amusement parks in the United States which are still operating, are near Windsor Locks. The oldest is Lake Compounce in Bristol, CT. The second oldest is Riverside Park, in Agawam, MA. (<http://mentalfloss.com/article/81406/11-oldest-amusement-parks-us>)

The Great Depression of the 1930s took a terrible toll on Riverside Park. It was not open for most of that decade. The park reopened in May 1940 under the ownership of Edward J. Carroll, with a host of new rides and attractions. That was the start of a long period of success. The Carroll family didn't sell the Park until the mid 1990s, when it was bought by an amusement park conglomerate, and became Six Flags New England. When this happened, it turned into a completely different kind of park. Big money was spent on turning it into a big time theme park. With that came the high prices of entry. In December 2018, a standard one-day ticket cost \$70.99, although discounts as low as \$42 could be found. That does not include the \$25 per day for parking.

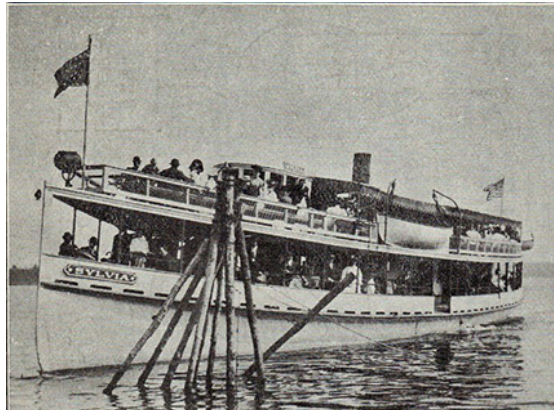
The park was no longer a regional park that kids could go, on the spur of the moment, and spend a day there for a few dollars.

Let us return to the reopening of the Riverside Park in 1940. World War II was still going on, but business was very good at the Park. As the war wound down and soldiers returned home, more and more folks from Windsor Locks made trips to Riverside Park. The postwar “boom” years of the 1940s and 1950s and even the 1960s were the years in which kids would hang out at Wuzzy’s on a weekend, trying to find a group to take an informal trip to Riverside Park. It was often boys looking for girls, and maybe even vice versa.

Now let’s take a look at some postcards and photos of Riverside Park.

Riverside Grove

Riverside Grove was a precursor of Riverside Park. They had boats that landed at Riverside Grove.

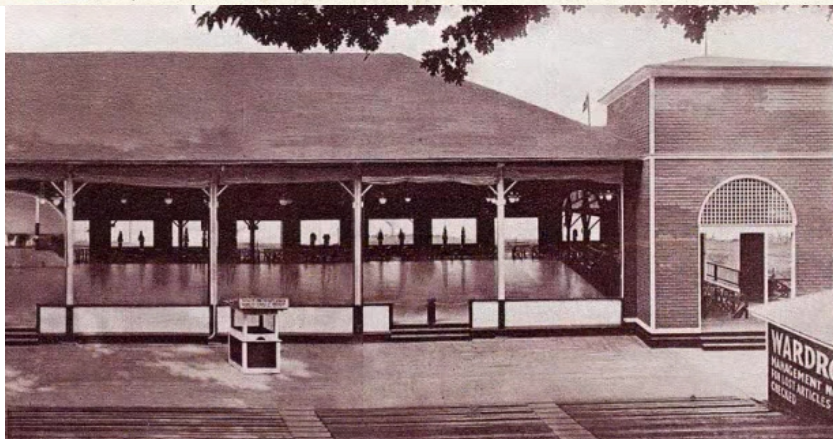
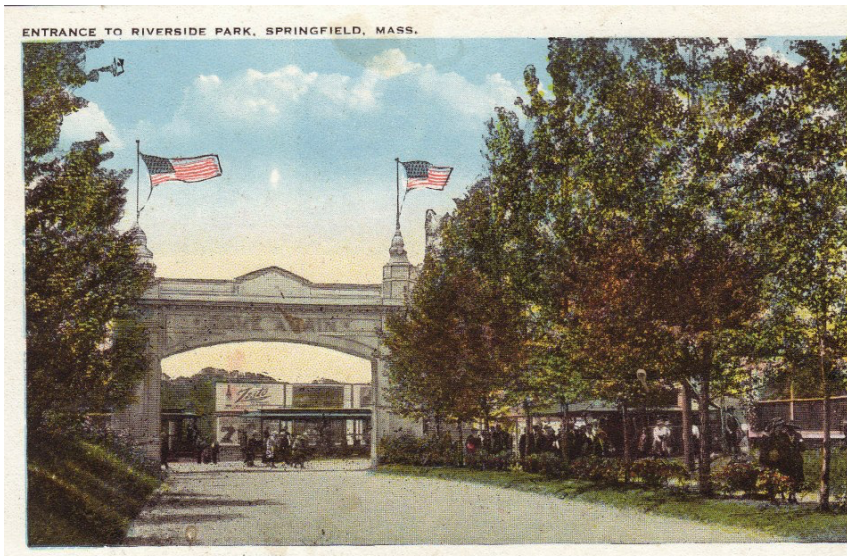


Sylvia lands at Riverside Grove



“Riverside Grove” workers. (later Riverside Park)

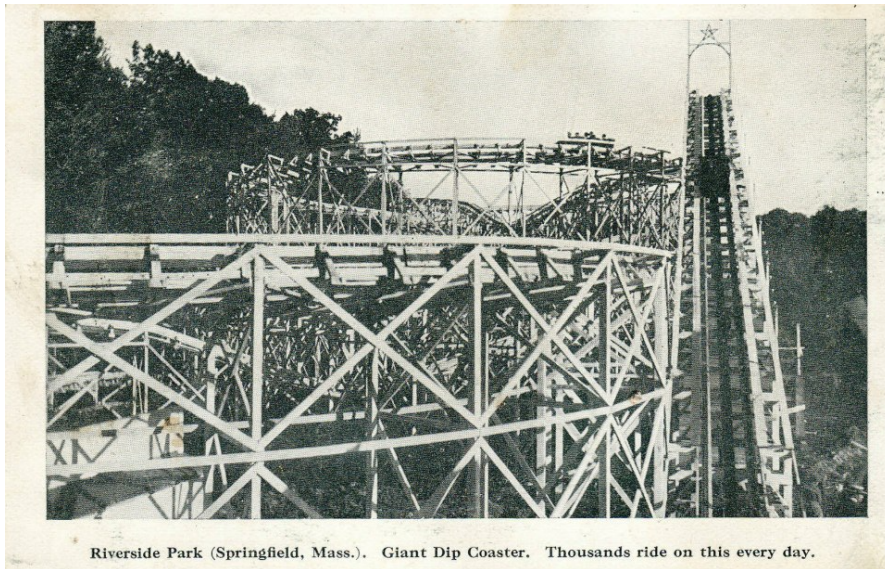
Early Photos of Riverside Park



Cook's Dance Pavilion 1928 -1930s



Riverside Park (Springfield, Mass.). Many feet keep time to the best of music.



Riverside Park (Springfield, Mass.). Giant Dip Coaster. Thousands ride on this every day.

"THE CARROUSEL CAFETERIA" AT RIVERSIDE PARK, AGAWAM, MASS.



RIVERSIDE PARK NATATORIUM. The most sanitary bathing pool in the world, 300 feet in diameter, filtered water, 98% pure, 3000 gallons per minute flowing in and out of the pool.



Roller Rink

Riverside Park in the mid 1900s



Riverside Park Roller Coaster



Riverside Park Loop Ride at Night



Riverside Park Log Ride



NORTH-SOUTH MIDWAY AT RIVERSIDE PARK, AGAWAM, MASS.



Riverside Speedway

RIVERSIDE SPEEDWAY
Sat., July 3, 7:30 P.M.

NASCAR
INTERNATIONAL

Action Packed
STOCK CAR RACES

50 Laps
PLUS FIGURE **8**

General Admission **\$3.00**
Children Under 12 **1.00**

Res. Seats phone 786-9300
RIVERSIDE PARK
ROUTE 159 • AGAWAM, MASS.
FREE PARKING

July 3, 1976



Riverside Park's Speedway Entrance





School Bus Demolition Derby

Conclusion

Anyone who has lived in Windsor Locks will tell you that you can't live in Windsor Locks without visiting nearby towns for shopping (Enfield Mall, Enfield Square, G.Fox in Hartford, Steigers in Springfield, Geissler's in Warehouse Point, Railroad Salvage, etc.), and for entertainment (East Windsor Drive In, Babb's Beach, Riverside Park, Hammonasset State Park Beach, etc.) All of these places were close by, and they make life fuller and more interesting. Folks from Windsor Locks have been visiting Riverside Park for as long as it has existed. The visits increased as the lives of immigrants became more settled. In the 1940s, 50s and 60s, Riverside park offered a fun place to go with family or friends, and the cost of a visit could be minimal. There was no entrance fee. You just paid for the rides, and parking was free.

In 1996, Riverside Park became Six Flags New England and the nature of the place changed. For a long time, visiting Riverside Park was a simple, cheap, seven mile drive, where folks from Windsor Locks could spend an afternoon with friends and only spend a couple of dollars. One could go to the Riverside Speedway and see their favorite drivers in stock car races, in "Figure 8" races, and even in demolition derbies. Later, it became a large, expensive entertainment center, in the mold of Disneyland. It changed from a regional park to a place that attracted people from all of New England.

Sources

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Riverside Park, by David Cecci, Arcadia Publishers, Charleston, SC. 2011

Chapter 9

Charlie Kaman



Charles Huron Kaman 1919-2011

Introduction

Charles Huron Kaman, who was known as "Charlie," was born in Washington, DC in 1919. He founded Kaman Aircraft Co. in Windsor Locks in 1945. He helped change Windsor Locks from a manufacturing town into a town which had major aircraft engineering firms such as Kaman Aircraft and Hamilton Standard. Before those companies came to town in the 1950s, virtually everyone in town lived between Main Street and West Street. When these companies came to town, the area from West Street to Bradley Field evolved from farmland into a sea of houses. The population of Windsor Locks only grew from 1,587 in 1860 to 5,221 in 1950. After the aeronautics companies came to Bradley Field, the population of our town doubled to 11,411 in the 1950s, and it went to 15,080 in the 1960s.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windsor_Locks,_Connecticut)

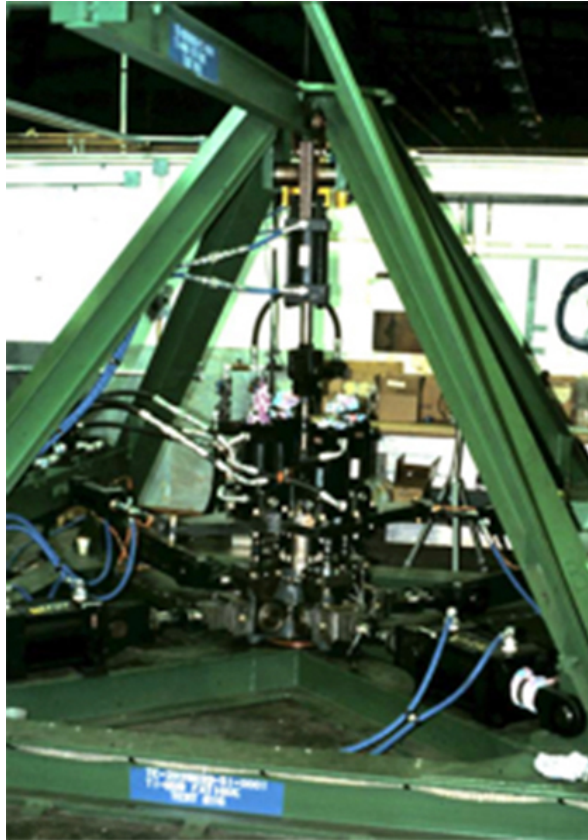
Hamilton Standard was already a large, well established company when it started its Windsor Locks branch in 1952. Kaman Aircraft Co., on the other hand was a brand new “start-up” in Windsor Locks which grew to become a multi-billion dollar company that revolutionized the helicopter industry and the music industry. This article is about the man who made this happen. Charlie Kaman affected many lives in Windsor Locks. Here are two examples.



Charley Kaman and Chet Pohorylo 1962

While in Windsor Locks High School, Chet Pohorylo was in a Junior Achievement company sponsored by Kaman Aircraft. Here is a photo of Chet selling stock in the Junior Achievement company to Charlie in 1961. One year later, Chet was working at Kaman Aircraft.

Jimmy Bancroft said in Facebook message on Aug 20, 2018 that he built test rigs for Charlie for 11 years, and he included the following photo of one of those rigs. As we shall see, Charlie and his engineers kept coming up with revolutionary designs for helicopter propulsion systems, and those new concepts had to be thoroughly tested. Rigs such as this were central to the process.



**Kaman Test Rig
built by Jimmy Bancroft**

The French philosopher and mathematician, Henri Poincare, was once asked what the difference is between a highly intelligent person and a person of ordinary intelligence. His response was that when presented with a difficult problem, the most important aspects of the problem will be noticed by the highly intelligent person. That explanation is an apt description of Charlie Kaman. When he was in high school, he was very interested in aviation. As a teenager, he set national duration records for hand-launched model gliders. This fits the description that Henri Poincare gave of a highly intelligent individual. As we shall see, he showed that same trait through his entire life. It is important to note that Charlie did not come from humble beginnings. His father was a German immigrant who supervised the building of the Supreme Court building and other major buildings in Washington, DC.

Charlie was born in Washington, DC. He graduated (magna cum laude) from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, at the head of his class with a degree in aeronautical engineering in 1940. He took a job with Hamilton Standard, working on propellor dynamics. He met Igor Sikorsky, who was developing helicopters for another division of that company. His life soon changed.

Charlie and the Aviation Industry

Igor Sikorsky was a pioneer in helicopter design. However Charlie, with no background in helicopter design, thought he could do even better. Inspired by Mr. Sikorsky's work, but wanting to go even further, he borrowed \$2,000 from friends, and founded his own helicopter company. He started his company in the garage of his mother's home in West Hartford, CT. In 1945, he founded Kaman Aircraft Co. in Windsor Locks, when he was just 26 years old!

When Charlie entered the fledgling business of vertical flight, helicopters were unstable and difficult to fly. Working at home nights and weekends, Mr. Kaman developed a new concept of rotor control based on "servo-flaps." These were small ailerons added to the edges of the rotor blades to improve helicopter stability. He also developed intermeshing rotors, which would increase lift while eliminating the tail rotor. These inventions became the hallmarks of all Kaman helicopters to follow.

What happened then was incredible. He started his company in 1945, and its first helicopter, the K-125, flew in 1947. In 1948, when he was less than 30 years old, the Navy bought two of his helicopters to evaluate them. In 1951, the Kaman K-225 used the servo flaps, intermeshing rotors and gas turbine engines.

The Kaman SH-2 Seasprite, developed in the 1950s, was a ship-based helicopter, which was developed and produced by Kaman Aircraft Corporation. It was used as a compact and fast-moving rotorcraft for utility and anti-submarine warfare missions. It was used by both the American Navy and Canadian Navy. The Seasprite was used through the Vietnam War, and was finally retired in 2001.

The purpose of this article is not to list all of the helicopters developed by Kaman. That would take a few volumes. The purpose of this article is to show Charlie Kaman's spirit, character and major accomplishments. For example, one of the proudest results of Mr. Kaman's distinguished career was that more than 15,000 lives were estimated to have been saved by Kaman helicopters were in the second half of the Twentieth century. Kaman's helicopters achieved many breakthroughs, including the first gas turbine-powered helicopter, the first twin-turbine-powered helicopter, the first remotely controlled helicopter and the first all-composite rotor blade. Over the years his helicopters set numerous records for performance and altitude (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110704120945/http://kaman.com/charles-kaman.php>)



Kaman SH-2 "Sea Sprite" in 1959

The Kaman H-43 "Husky" flew more rescue missions during the Korean and Vietnam wars than all other helicopters combined, and remains the only military helicopter to serve throughout its service life with no loss of life or accidents attributed to its design.

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20110704120945/http://kaman.com/charles-kaman.php>)

In 1961, Charlie started a second aviation business at Bradley Field. He founded AirKaman Inc., which provided fixed-base operations at Bradley Field. (<https://www.kaman.com/our-company/acquisition-history>)

Below is a photo of AirKaman Inc. headquarters, near Bradley Field.



AirKaman Inc., Bradley Field

Charlie received a number of awards for his accomplishments in aviation. In 1997, he received an award that had previously been given to people such as: Charles Lindbergh, Jimmy Doolittle, Neil Armstrong and Igor Sikorsky. It was the National Aeronautic Association's Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy, the nation's premier aviation award. President Clinton presented him with the National Medal of Technology, the nation's highest recognition for contributions to technical excellence in 1996.

He had a long, extraordinary career in aerospace. He continually bought companies and integrated them into his. By 2012, Kaman Aircraft Corporation, a company on the New York Stock Exchange, had 241 offices worldwide, revenue of \$1.59 Billion, total assets of \$1.1 Billion and a total equity of \$42.1 Billion. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaman_Aircraft)

Charlie and the Music Industry

Anyone who had accomplished the things that he did in aviation, would be one of the greatest businessmen in the world. However, aviation was only one of the businesses that the Charlie Kaman built. Charlie was an accomplished guitarist, who once turned down an offer to play with Tommy Dorsey's orchestra. Two people in history have revolutionized the guitar. Les Paul developed the electric guitar. Charlie Kaman revolutionized both acoustic and electric guitar design, as well as the manufacture and distribution of musical instruments.

In 1966, during a slow year in aviation, Charlie put a select group of his best aviation engineers on a very different and surprising task. He asked them to design a better guitar. He figured that they were expert at reducing vibration in helicopter parts, so they really knew the field of "vibration". Vibration is bad for helicopters, but it is the essence of a guitar. How can we make guitars that vibrate better? That sounds like an obvious question, but he was the first person ever to think of the "obvious" conclusion that helicopter engineers were the best people to make that happen. The fact that he could bring his interesting insights to fruition in both aviation and music, made him an amazing entrepreneur.

Charlie's group of engineers included a number of individuals who had woodworking as a hobby. Their first conclusion was that the back of the guitar needed to be thinner to promote better vibration, so they used a synthetic material for a thinner back, but the rest of the guitar was a conventional "dreadnought" design with the back parallel to the front. Unfortunately they couldn't find a way to join the new material to the wood sides very well.

Then the group came up with a wild conclusion. It was a conclusion that didn't seem realistic. They came up with the unconventional idea that the back of the guitar should be not only thin, but it should have a rounded, parabolic

shape. To make that happen, they developed a new synthetic fiberglass material called Lyrachord. It worked! The Ovation guitar made its debut in 1966, with unprecedented projection and sustain. Glenn Campbell introduced it on his TV show in 1968. His group continued to make improvements in the design of the guitar, including different materials, different placement of the sound-holes, reducing the weight, improving the ergonomics (making it easier to hold and play). (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ovation_Guitar_Company)

That was only one of Charlie's many powerful innovations to guitar design and guitar making. At the time, there were only acoustic guitars and electric guitars. Charlie's group invented a "pickup" that could be put in an acoustic guitar, which would allowed it to be an electric guitar whenever the player wanted it to be. He also developed electronic tuners that could be placed in a guitar to allow the player to quickly and easily tune their instrument.



Roundback Ovation Guitar

The Ovation guitar reached the height of its popularity in the 1980s. At that time, Paul Simon used in his "Concert in Central Park." Charlie's guitar company moved into making mandolins, acoustic bases, solid body guitars and ukuleles. The Ovation guitars were made in New Hartford, CT until 2014, when his music business was sold to the Fender company.

Charlie not only changed the design of guitars, he changed the way guitar manufacturers distributed their wares. Early on, Charlie saw the importance of efficient distribution in the music industry, first acquiring Coast Wholesale and later C. Bruno & Son, providing the building blocks for Kaman Music Co to establish a national distribution network while growing into the largest independent distributor of musical instrument accessories. In 2007, Kaman Music Corporation was sold to Fender Musical Instruments.

(https://web.archive.org/web/20140108131559/http://www.ovationguitars.com/whyovation/kamans_story)

Charlie the Philanthropist

Charlie was not only a successful inventor and entrepreneur, he was a humanitarian and a philanthropist, especially for the vision-impaired. Charlie and his wife, Roberta, founded Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, which breeds and trains guide dogs for the blind at its Bloomfield, CT headquarters.

Charlie and his son were on the way home with their brand new dog when Charlie and his son stopped for lunch, and the boy darted out of the car and across a busy parking lot. The dog lunged after the child and skidded to a halt in front of him. Charlie hugged his son. Charlie and his wife Roberta had raised German shepherds and donated them for police work. Knowing how a guide dog had changed a neighbor's life, Kaman began to believe that this breed of dog could be trained as the ultimate guide for blind people.



**Charlie and Roberta Kaman
with guide dogs**

In 1981, Charlie and Roberta founded the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, and launched New England's first guide dog school. Headquartered in Bloomfield, Fidelco remains New England's only guide dog school. Since 1981, it has placed over 600 guide dogs. The Kamans and the Fidelco dogs have fulfilled their purpose of promoting increased independence for hundreds of men and women who are blind.

(<https://www.ctphilanthropy.org/resources/connecticut-toolkit-giving/giving-story-charles-kaman>)

Conclusion

It is difficult to overstate the effect that Charlie Kaman had on Windsor Locks, and on the world. He created thousands of jobs in his new helicopter plant which increased the population, the housing, the number of “white collar” jobs and engineering jobs as well as blue collar jobs in Windsor Locks. He did this by introducing important advances in rotor wing technology, and successfully selling them to the military of both the United States and friendly foreign governments. During a slowdown in the aviation business, he put some of his engineers on a project to develop the best guitars in the world. They developed the Ovation line of guitars with rounded fiberglass backs, and they invented electronics for stringed instruments that can be put inside an acoustic instrument to allow it to be played through an amplifier. Charlie built a massive empire in both helicopters and music. During this time he also built a group which trained and distributed seeing eye dogs for visually impaired people.

What enabled him to do all of this? He was creative in analyzing engineering questions. He came up with bold ideas, and he had the gusto and the ability to build groups of people who could make them happen. He was known for being a supportive boss. He fostered a work environment which enabled people to do their best. He had a wonderful “intuition”. He saw things that other people didn’t see, such as the fact that helicopter engineers, with their skills in reducing vibration, would be the appropriate people to design a better guitar which was made use of increased vibrational capability. He was a well-liked, well respected entrepreneur who cared about his employees, and treated them exceptionally well, and while all of this was going on, he took the time and effort to be a philanthropist.

An article about Charlie, called “Charlie Kaman’s Story: A Man who Went Against the Grain” captured his spirit as follows: “A visionary leader, a pioneer and an entrepreneur, above all, Charlie believed in the people at Kaman. He both challenged and encouraged his team while paying them the respect that they deserved. His goal throughout was to innovate and stretch boundaries. The success of his companies was a mere byproduct of these efforts.” (https://web.archive.org/web/20140108131559/http://www.ovationguitars.com/whyovation/kamans_story)

In other words, Charlie Kaman had the ability to bring out the best in the people who worked for him. He created an environment, that is, a culture of accomplishment, that enabled his employees to do their best. No one person could have made all of the breakthroughs that his companies did. He set the stage for his employees to thrive when working for and with him. He set directions and goals in a wide variety of disciplines. He was a visionary in developing new capabilities and businesses in diversified fields.

How big was Kaman Aircraft Corp? In 2012, well after selling his music company, Kaman Aircraft Corp had assets of \$1.1 Billion. The total equity of the company was \$42.1 Billion. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaman_Aircraft) The young man who started his business in Windsor Locks in 1945 did pretty well. He died in Bloomfield, CT in 2011.

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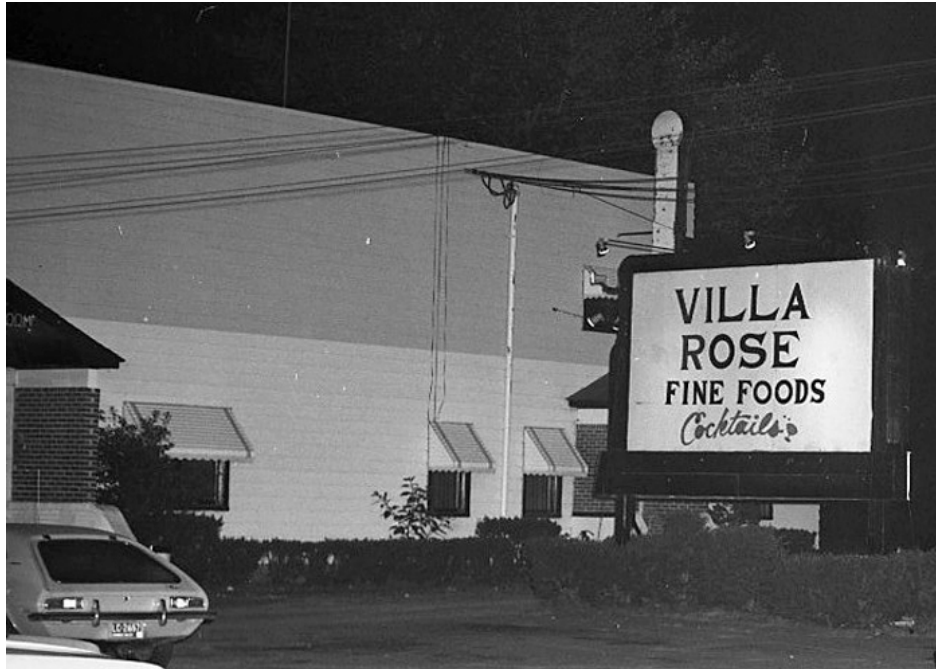
Chapter 10

The Villa Rose

The Villa Rose restaurant and bowling alley was a well-known establishment in Windsor Locks from the 1940s through the 1980s. It was a large building with a big sign on Spring Street, not far from Bradley Field. It held innumerable wedding receptions, birthday parties, business meetings and family parties. It was a good place to go for a meal. It had a bowling alley in its lower floor, and the scores of league games were posted in the *Windsor Locks Journal* and in the Springfield newspapers. The *Springfield Union*, for example, had 1,123 ads, articles and bowling results for the Villa Rose between 1942 and 1989. Below are photos of the Villa Rose building and of the sign by the building.



**The Villa Rose Restaurant
West Spring Street, Windsor Locks, CT**



The first ad for the Villa Rose was in the *Windsor Locks Journal* on November 6, 1941. See below. There were no newspaper ads or articles on the closing of the Villa Rose. The last ad for the Villa Rose was in the Jan. 12, 1989 *Springfield Union*, which is also below.



**OPENING OF
VILLA ROSE RESTAURANT**
—SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH—
WEST SPRING STREET,
WINDSOR LOCKS

American and Italian Foods
A Sandwich or a Complete Meal
Served Appetizingly in home-like surroundings

Under Management of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Del Nero
—Souvenirs for all Patrons on Opening Day—

Nov.6,1941, Windsor Locks Journal

nightclubs –

country

Amvets Post 12 — Fri., Sat. — Telegraph Canyon Band. Chicopee.
Billy T's — tonight, Fri., Sat., Sun. — Shorty Gagne and the Bar-T Band. West Springfield.
Circle H Lounge — Sat. — Nashville Blue. Holland.
Harvey's Saloon — tonight, Fri., Sat. — Joey Baer and Quickdraw. Chicopee.
Pulaski Hall — Sat. — Country Friends. Chicopee.
Ranch House — tonight, Fri., Sat. — Joe Maxwell and Cedar Creek. Springfield.
Southwick American Legion Post 338 — Fri., Sat. — Mike Baker and the Country Gentlemen. Southwick.
Southwick Inn — Fri., Sat. — D.K. and the Midnight Reunion. Southwick.
Villa Rose — Fri., Sat. — Willow Creek Band. Windsor Locks, Conn.

The Mist — ton
 Ivory. Greenfie
My Brother's F
 Sat. — DJ the
My Place — f
 Springfield.
Pearl Street —
 and Company
 Lucky 7 (dow
 Sat. — Scruff
 DJ Strollin' Ro
Pogos — tonigl
 DJs Dave and
Regal Beagle —
 rock and oldie
Samuel's — ton
 DJ Sound Tra
 lyoke.
September's —
 ics. Chicopee.
Sh-Boom's — ti
 — DJ with ro
 field.
Sheehan's Cafe
 Johnny and th
 Big Bang The

Jan. 12, 1989. Springfield Union's
 Last ad for the Villa Rose

The Villa Rose was originally owned by the Del Nero brothers. James Castellini bought the business from them in 1947. He built an addition in 1949. James' brother-in-law, Joseph Quagliaroli, was his partner until 1962 when Joseph died. The lower floor of the Villa Rose had a duckpin bowling alley, which was operated by John Carnevale. In 1964, James Castellini sold the Villa Rose to Al Kone of Hartford. (from the April, 20 1964 issue of the *Springfield Union*)

An article in the March 21, 1956 issue of the *Springfield Union* said that Patrick Quagliaroli was a part owner of the Villa Rose until his death on March 21, 1956, which happened while he was shoveling snow at the restaurant. Dr. Ettore Carniglia, was the medical Examiner. He went to the Villa Rose, but Mr. Quagliaroli was already dead when he arrived.

Jack Redmond did an excellent "Cabbages and Kings" column on Al Kone, owner of the Villa Rose, in his Feb 15, 1985 column. By then, Mr. Kone had owned the Villa Rose for about 11 years. How he came to buy the restaurant is interesting. He was an avid duckpin

bowler, so he spent a lot of time in the bowling alley of the Villa Rose. One night, he decided to go upstairs and get a meal at the restaurant. He noticed a sign saying that the place was for sale. He decided to buy the place from Jim Castellini. He had no experience as a cook or as a bartender. However, he had a very likable, outgoing personality, and he was a hard worker. Mr. Kone had been an avid sportsman all of his life. He was on the baseball, football, basketball and track teams of Weaver High School in Hartford. He became an avid bowler later in life. He and his wife ran the Villa Rose, and they had four children: Teddy, Jim, Elaine and Cindy. (Jack Redmond, Cabbages and Kings column in the *Windsor Locks Journal*, Nov. 20, 1980)

In 1979, the restaurant was damaged by the tornado. They were closed for four days for repairs, and then were back in business.

In his Feb. 15, 1985 Cabbages and Kings column, Jack Redmond wrote about Al Kone's son, Ted. Like his father, Ted was an avid bowler. He learned by bowling in the duckpin alleys of the Villa Rose, but he took a liking to ten-pin bowling, which was available at Bradley Lanes. He became friends with Larry Lichstein, who became a professional bowler. Both spent a lot of time at Bradley Lanes. He also knew Pete Couture, the other Windsor Locks man who was a professional bowler at that time. Both Larry and Pete helped Ted with his bowling game. Ted made it into the professional circuit. He was good. At that point, he already had 15 perfect games (score of 300). An injury put an end to Ted's bowling career,

Al and Rosalie Kone owned the Villa Rose from 1963 to 1993. Later in life, at the age of 92, Rosalie Kone was the chaplain of the American Legion Gensi-Viola Post No 36.

<http://www.courant.com/community/suffield-edition/rnw-wl-0730-people-rosalie-kone-20150722-story.html>

The Villa Rose advertisement in the 1956 Windsor Locks Yellow Pages is below:



Villa Rose Ad in Yellow Pages, 1956



Part of 1956 Dexter Bowling Team at Villa Rose lanes. Back row, Left to Right are: Chet Grabiec, Joe Tria, Gene Doe, Art Ciparelli, Charlie Pyznar & Jasper Maltese. Front row: Peno Piazza, Janet Grabiec, Helen Tenerowicz, Helen Hawley, Jo Walters, & Joe Piastka

The duckpin bowling lanes in the lower floor of the Villa Rose were very popular for decades, both for league play and for family and friends. Above is a photo of the 1956 Dexter Bowling team at the Villa Rose lanes.

Below are photos of the wedding reception of Susan Root and Dick Meck which was held at the Villa Rose on November 21, 1964.



**John Zenitsky's Band at Villa Rose
Wedding reception of Susan Root & Dick Meck**



**Wedding Reception: Susan Root & Dick Meck
Villa Rose, Nov. 21, 1964**

Besides Susan Root and Dick Meck, guests at the head table included: Susan's brother, David, and her sisters, Pat and Gail, Dick's brother, Bret Meck, and Bill Marconi.

We have now seen photos of the dining and dancing facility on the upper floor of the Villa Rose and of the duckpin bowling alley on the lower floor. The Villa Rose served the Windsor Locks community well for a half a century.

The Villa Rose was an "end of WWII" phenomenon, much like Bradley Field. Both got started as the war was winding down. In the 1940s, when they got started, the land in Windsor Locks between West Street and Route 75 was mostly farmland. Almost everyone in Windsor Locks lived and shopped between Main St. and West St. As Bradley Field became a civilian airport, and companies began to be formed to support the airport, the "Southwest" area of town grew quickly. Soon that farmland between West St and Route 75 was filled with houses. That was the time when the Villa Rose blossomed. The area near Route 75 was booming, and a nice restaurant and bowling alley was just what it needed.

As time went on, the same thing happened to the Villa Rose that happened to the wood-framed downtown businesses before the Main Street redevelopment of the late 1960s. There weren't built to last forever. To continue as a large restaurant and bowling alley, the building would have had to be rebuilt. That didn't happen. The Villa Rose had a long and successful run as both a restaurant and a bowling alley. Then the property became "Scata's Vehicle Repair". It had a long and proud life.

Sources:

Photos of outside of The Villa Rose are from Frank Baron and Wedding photos from Susan Root Meck

<http://www.courant.com/community/suffield-edition/rnw-wl-0730-people-rosalie-kone-20150722-story.html>

Information on bowling from phone call with Larry Lichtstein.

Cabbages & Kings, J. Redmond, *Windsor Locks Journal*, 02 15 1985

Chapter 11

Comical Windsor Locks Postcards from the Early 1900s







If you care to be the
main squeeze come to



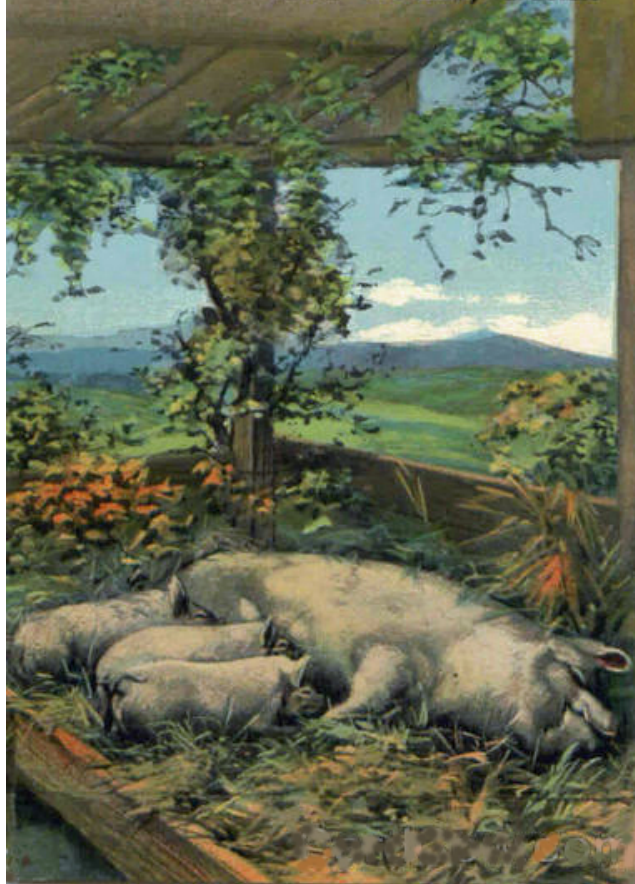
"Everybody's doing
it now"



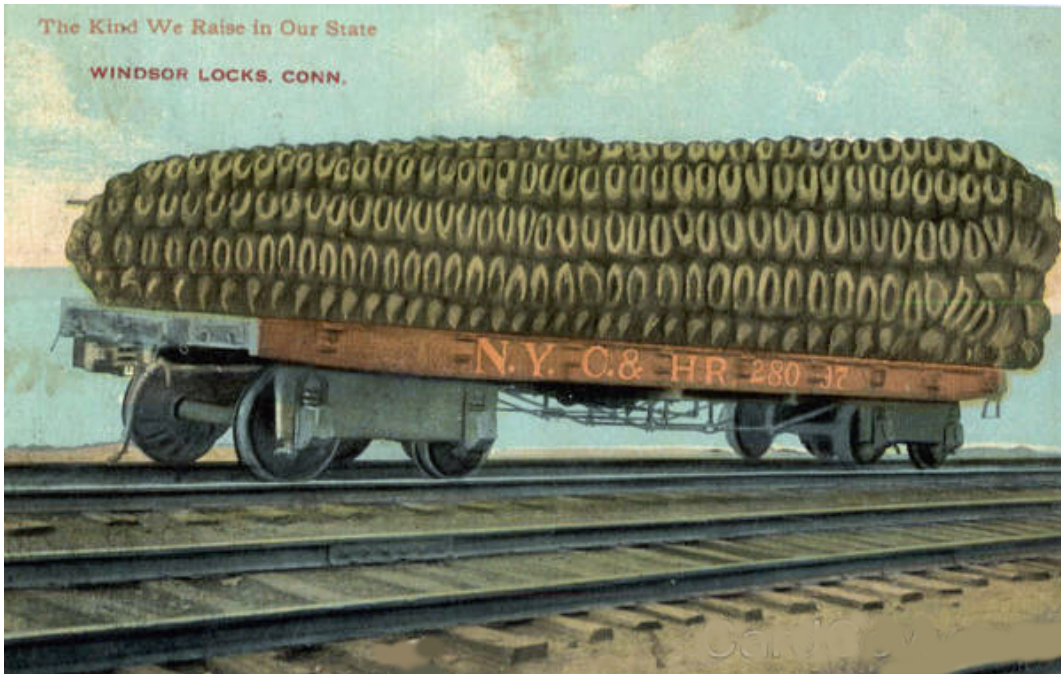
I'll be prepared when you come to
Windsor Locks, Conn.

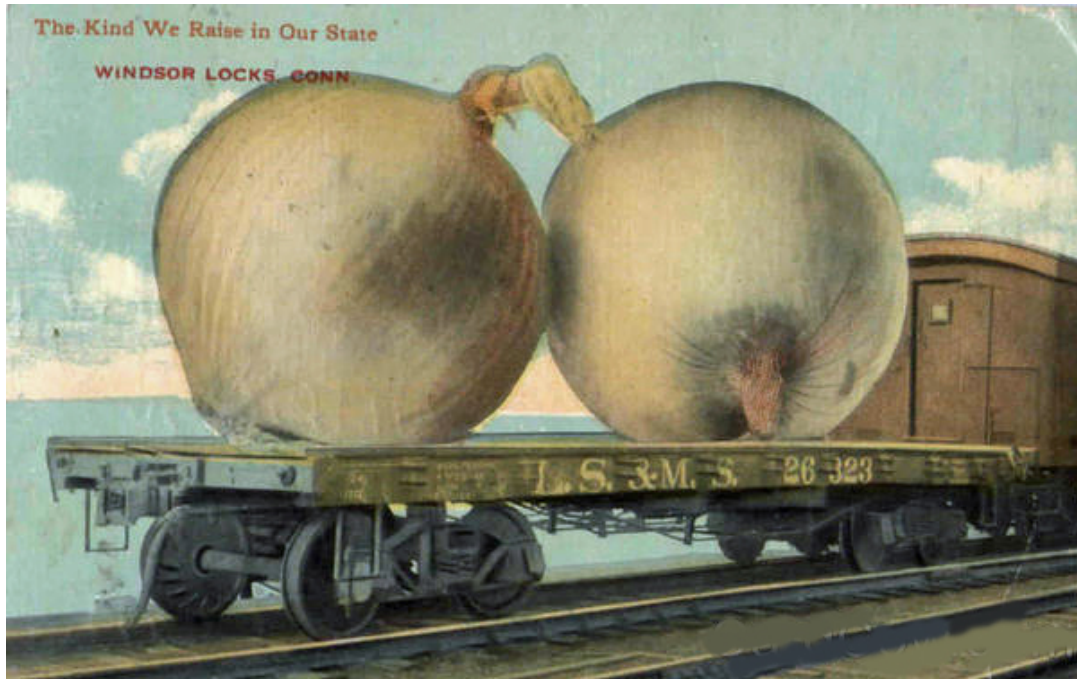


The only Suckers we have in
Windsor Locks, Conn.



The Kind We Raise in Our State
WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.





Chapter 12

Bradley Bowl



Bradley Bowl (~ 2017)

A Bit of Bowling History

Bowling is a rather old sport, which has undergone many changes, and the changes are still coming. Here are some interesting dates in bowling history:

- 3200 BC - Bowling was known in Egypt
- 0000 AD - Romans were known to play a form of bowling.
- 1299 AD - the first bowling alley that is still in existence was built in Southampton, England
- 1520 - King Henry VIII was an avid bowler.
- 1846 - the earliest bowling lanes still in existence in the US were built in Woodstock, CT.
- 1841 - the state of Connecticut banned 9 Pin Bowling to stop the gambling that was involved. The result was that 10 Pin Bowling was invented in order to get around the ban on 9 Pin Bowling.
- 1875 - the National Bowling Association was formed in New York City.
- 1958 - the Professional Bowlers Association was formed in Akron, Ohio.
- 1962 - the Professional Bowlers Association's Tournament of Champions was started.

The preceding information is from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowling>

- 1962 - Bradley Lanes opened for business in Windsor Locks, CT.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowling>

In late 2018, Bradley Lanes was redeveloped by its new owner, and has greatly expanded the amusements available on the site. This is part of the ever changing nature of bowling. Back in the 1960s, bowling alleys were much simpler. Folks from Windsor Locks could find three styles of bowling in town or nearby. Duckpin bowling was found at the Villa Rose. Ten Pin bowling was introduced to Windsor Locks by Bradley Lanes. Candlepin bowling was available at Riverside Park and in Springfield.

There was a small old bowling alley at the bottom of Grove Street, near Main Street, named “Blanche’s Bowling Alley”. It started in about 1929, and its technology never changed. When it closed in 1960, it still used teen aged boys to set the pins. It burned down in 1972. In the 1950s one could go there and bowl a number of games for very little money, and have a good time. It was good form to tip the pin boy after your games. Blanche got upset when bowlers intentionally rolled a ball down the alley while the pin boy was still setting the pins.

All three types of bowling used ten pins. “Ten Pin” pins were larger than duckpins, but of a similar shape. Candlestick pins were like candles which were a bit wider in the middle, and you left the “deadwood” on the alley between shots. With “Ten Pin” bowling, you used a larger ball with holes for three fingers, and you got two shots per frame. With duckpin and candlestick bowling, you used three smaller balls with no finger holes, and you got three shots per frame.

As we have seen, bowling has been changing for over 5000 years! The changes haven’t stopped. As with cars and clothing and hair styles, it may be that human nature requires change in order for humans to maintain interest in anything. Many of us remember things like: “Midnight Bowling,” “Cosmic Bowling,” “Karaoke Cosmic Bowling”. While professional bowling requires quiet and concentration, these innovations brought flashing lights and loud music.

Bradley Bowl

Bradley Bowl opened for business in Windsor Locks in October of 1962. Back then, it was called “Bradley Lanes”. Below is a Dec. 22, 1962 ad for Bradley Lanes. The first mention of Bradley Lanes in the *Windsor Locks Journal* was on Nov. 8, 1962. That article is also below. Computer searches on the phrase “Bradley Lanes” show that the term was used from the time that the business opened until the present day, even though the name had changed to “Bradley Bowl”.

The history of Bradley Bowl is presented below in the section named: “A Conversation with Larry Lichstein”.

 It's That Time Again!
 Here's Wishing You The
 Happiest New Year Possible
BRADLEY LANES
 Bowling and Billiard Center
 TEL. NA 3-2597
 TURNPIKE ROAD WINDSOR LOCKS

Windsor Locks Journal 12-22-1962

K. of C. League Organized
 Riverside Council, Knights
 of Columbus has two leagues
 bowling on Wednesday eve-
 nings at **Bradley Lanes** on
 Turnpike Road.
 During the past week the
 following high scores were reg-
 istered: High single, Joe Mc-
 Mahon, 256; Jim Fahey, 233;
 John Taravella, 224. High
 three strings—Joe McMahon,
 614, John Taravella, 583; John
 Macaluso, 566. High Average:
 Joe McMahon, 283; John Mac-
 aluso, 179; Bob Fahey, 173.

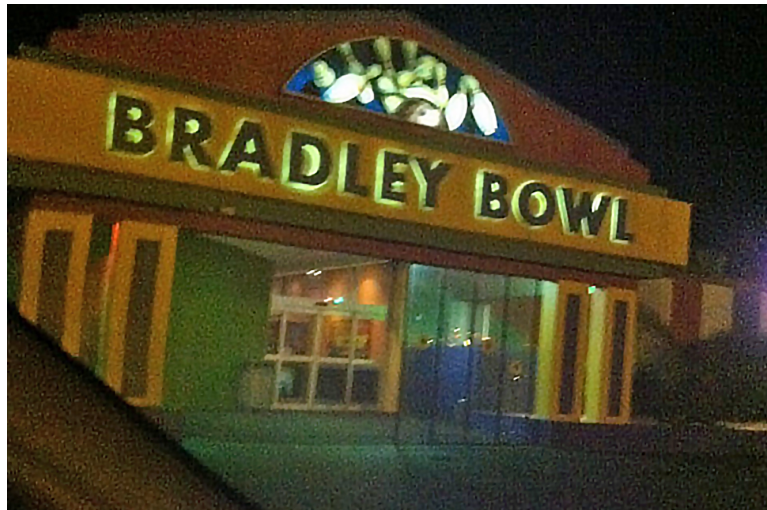
Windsor Locks Journal 11 8 1962

Photos of Bradley Lanes / Bradley Bowl

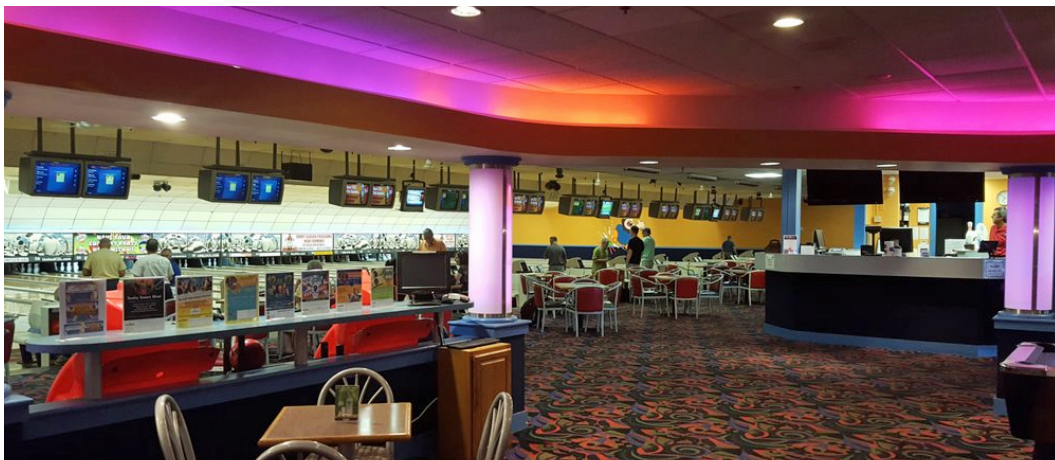
Bradley Bowl was the site of countless parties, family outings, afternoons with friends, league bowling and big events like the Pro Tour. This set of four photos of Bradley Lanes should bring back fond memories of the place.



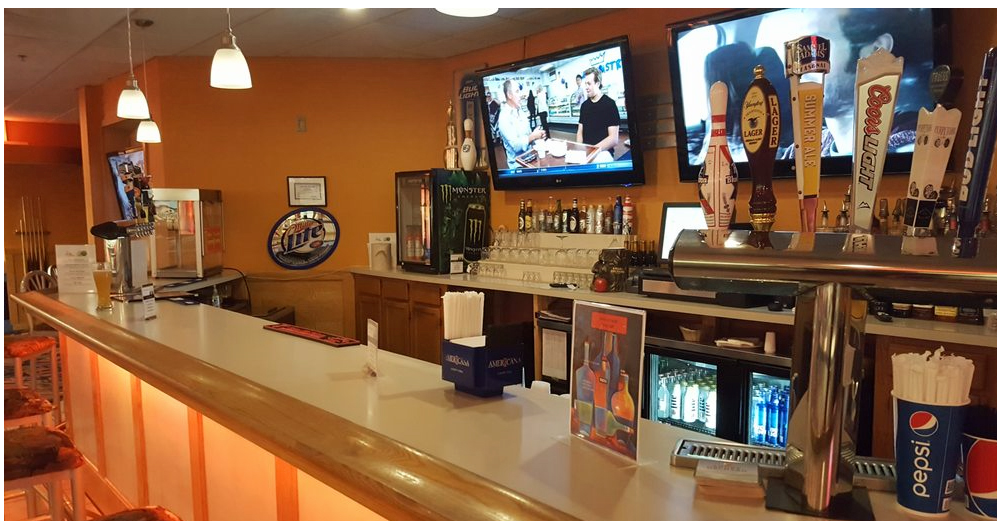
Bradley Bowl in the daylight



Bradley Bowl at night



Interior of Bradley Bowl



Bradley Bowl Bar

Important People In Windsor Locks Bowling

Larry Lichstein

Back in the 1960, a young man named Larry Lichstein spent a lot of time at Bradley Bowl. He became a professional bowler. He was inducted into the Professional Bowlers Association Hall of Fame in 1996. The inscription on his induction says:

“Lichstein entered the Hall as the 22nd member in the Meritorious Service Category. Without Lichstein and his company “Professional Bowlers Service Corporation,” the players and the PBS couldn’t get many things done. Ask any professional and they will tell you that Larry Lichstein played a significant part in the development and growth of the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA).”
(<https://www.pba.com/bowlers/HallOfFame/294>)



Larry Lichstein

The Lichstein legacy dates back to the 1960s when Larry earned the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) “Rookie of the Year” honors in 1969. He won his first tournament title in 1971. On the tour, he won five national titles. Unfortunately, an accident with a sheet of plate glass brought an end to his years on the professional tour. But that didn’t stop Larry. He took over as the PBA Tour Player Service Director. He had a large “rolling pro shop” that he drove from stop to stop on the Pro Tour, and he provided the pros with the

services that you can only get at a top-notch pro shop. He drilled up to 300 balls a week for the pros. (<https://www.bowl.com/news/newsdetails.aspx?id=12884906580>) Later on, Larry bowled on the Senior circuit.

Larry ran the Pro Shop at Bradley Lanes from 1970 to 1974. Larry's son, Mike Lichstein, took over the Pro Shop at Bradley Lanes in 1997. Mike still runs the Litchco Pro Shop at Sparetime Entertainment (previously Bradley Bowl).

Larry will be inducted into the United States Bowling Congress (USBC) Hall of Fame on May 1, 2019, in Las Vegas. This is the highest honor in bowling. (message from Sonya West)

Pete Couture

Another great Windsor Locks bowler was Pete Couture. Pete was born in Auburn, Maine, but spent his formative years in Windsor Locks. In his 24-year career as a PBA Tour competitor, he won five standard PBA titles. Couture began his Senior Pro career in 1995 when he earned Rookie of the Year honors. He won the first of nine Senior Tour titles in Reno in 1996, and captured a pair of USBC Senior Masters titles in 1998. He was elected to the PBA50 (Senior Tour) Hall of Fame in the Performance category, based on his exceptional record for a minimum of 10 years as a "senior" competitor.

(<https://www.pba.com/articles/Cancer-Claims-PBA-Hall-of-Famer-Pete-Couture-at-73>)

His induction to PBA Hall of Fame was in 2016. His induction to the USBC Hall of Fame was in 2004. Pete passed away the summer of 2018 at age of 73. (message from Sonya West)



Pete Couture

Kim Adler

Windsor Locks also had a woman bowler who reached the highest ranks of the sport. Kim Adler lived in East Longmeadow, but she bowled out of Bradley Lanes. Below is a photo of Kim.



Kim Adler

Here are some of Kim's achievements. She was inducted into the USBC Hall of Fame in 2016. She won 16 championships between 1995 and 2002. She was the Professional Woman's Bowling Association (PWBA) Rookie of the year in 1991. She was ranked in the top ten women in the world for ten years. She bowled 24 perfect games (score of 300), and she once bowled two consecutive 300 games. She is ranked 9th in PWBA career earnings. She was married to Pete Couture from 1989 to 1994. You can learn more about Kim on the following websites:

<https://kimadler.com>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kim_Adler

Sonya and Ken West

Ken West was involved in the original promotion of the PBA tournaments. He started the tournaments in Rhode Island and moved them to Bradley Lanes in Windsor Locks in 1974. In that year, he had two tournaments at Bradley Lanes. One was for the summer tour and the second was for the winter tour. That continued until 1999.

Sonya has been inducted into the Windsor Locks Sports Hall of Fame, which has an excellent writeup on her. It states:

“Sonya was the fourth of only eight women bowlers to be inducted into the United States Bowling Congress’ Connecticut Bowling Hall of Fame in the past 32 years. Sonya was also the

first recipient of the Connecticut Women's Bowling Associations "Bowler of the Year" Award in 1984 and is a member of the Greater Hartford Women's Bowling Association Hall of Fame.

Sonya enjoyed the sport of bowling so much that she served as tournament director for the New England Women's Bowling Association ("NEWBA") and ran tournaments for over 20 years. She also worked as the office manager for the Professional Bowlers Tour stop at Bradley Bowl."

<http://www.windsorlocks-hof.com/sonya-west-pohoylo-macierowski/>

In conjunction with the PBA tournaments at Bradley Bowl, Ken and Sonya organized pro-am leagues (bringing in 800 to 1500 people) throughout the New England area, giving adults and children the opportunity to bowl with the best.

Conversation with Larry Lichstein

On the evening of October 12, 2018, I had a long telephone conversation with Larry Lichstein. He was glad to hear that a chapter for a Windsor Locks history book was being written on the Bradley Bowl, and graciously provided me with historical background on Bradley Bowl and on how bowling has been changing. The following paragraphs came from that conversation.

Bradley Lanes opened for business on October 8, 1962, a week before the original article on Bradley Lanes appeared in the *Windsor Locks Journal*. The land was owned by Alexander Jarvis, who built and owned the Bradley Lanes building. The owners of the business were Melvin Blatt and Philip Sachs. Blatt and Sachs wanted to capitalize on the "bowling boom" that was taking place in the United States at that time. This boom was being fueled by the bowling shows that were appearing on television.

Bradley Lanes was built across Turnpike Road, and near the entrance/exit to Bradley Field in order to attract the workers from the aeronautics companies, such as Hamilton Standard and Kaman Aircraft. Many workers would get off of their shifts and go to the lanes for some bowling and beer. Bowling leagues were formed quickly.

But there was a problem. The original "semi-automatic pin setters" were of an early type, and they were problematic. Bowlers were getting frustrated with continued problems. By 1964, Mel Blatt and Phil Sachs were desperate, and sold their business to Alexander Jarvis, who owned the building and the land. Mr. Jarvis also owned another bowling alley. He installed new and improved automatic pinsetters at Bradley Lanes, and hired Tom Fahey as his General Manager. Mr. Fahey was there from 1964 to 1967, when Red Burnham

took over as General Manager. Red was there from 1969 to 1997. Later he wrote a bowling column for Hartford newspapers.

The new and improved automatic pinsetters were installed in Bradley Lanes in 1973. This really improved things and in 1974, the Pro Bowlers Tour came to Bradley Lanes. It came back every year from 1974 to 1999. It came back one more time in 2003. Having the Pro Bowlers Tour come to Bradley Lanes was a big thing in Windsor Locks.

When Mr. Jarvis died, his wife, Alice, took over as owner of Bradley Lanes. In 2004 she sold Bradley Bowl to Dick Corley, who owned other alleys. His company name is "Bowling New England," but his Bowling Alleys go by the name of "Spare Time Entertainment".

On the subject of how bowling has been changing, Larry said that duckpin and candlepin bowling, which were popular in the area in the 1950s, began to decline in the 1960s, probably as a result of the bowling shows on TV which only showed Ten Pin bowling. By the 1980s, these two styles of bowling were just about gone, and Ten Pin bowling took over.

Change continued. In the 1980s, attendance in Ten Pin bowling alleys began to decline, and that continued through the 1990s and 2000s. There were fewer TV shows on bowling. The cost of replacing lanes and pinsetters was increasing, and the value of the land that the bowling alleys were on was increasing. As a result, bowling alley owners began to change their businesses from purely bowling to "Family Entertainment Centers". That is the reason that Bradley Lanes was sold, and that the new owners are switching to the Family Entertainment Center approach, with the addition of gaming arcades, laser tag and paint ball gaming areas, as well as bowling.

Sparetime Entertainment

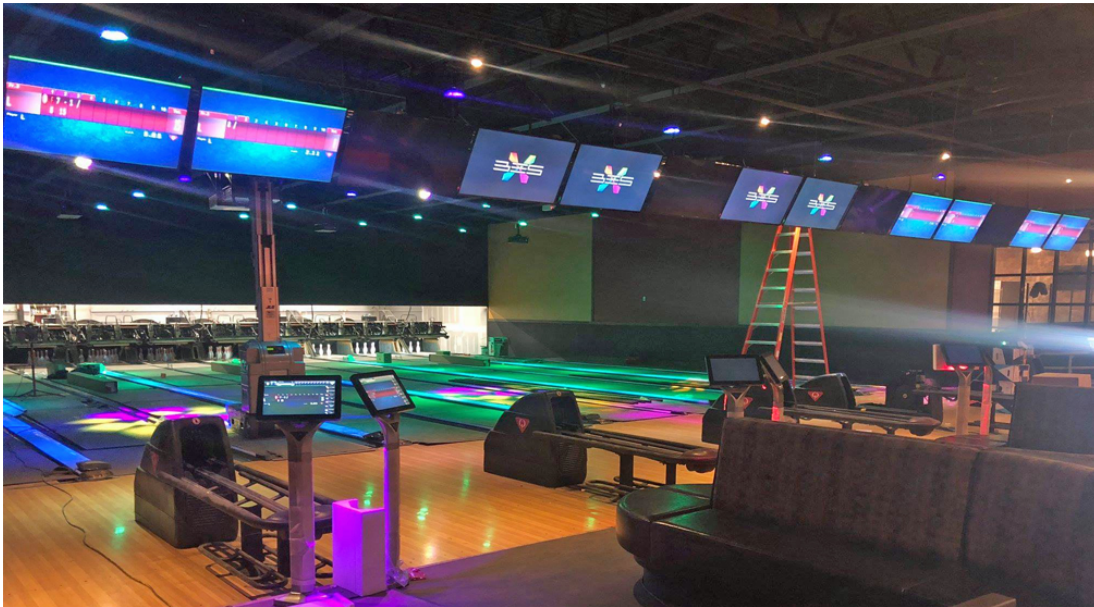
As of the end of October 2018, Bradley Lanes became Sparetime Entertainment. Here is the front of the building after its redevelopment.



Below is a new advertisement for Sparetime Entertainment, and photos of the eating area, and of other gaming areas.



Of course, Sparetime Entertainment still has bowling.



Conclusion

Bradley Lanes has had a long and illustrious history on Turnpike Road from 1962 to the time of this writing (2018), and has just been renovated by its new owners. During its existence, Bradley Lanes has only had three owners. In time, it came to be known as Bradley Bowl, although it was still often referred to in newspapers as Bradley Lanes. It was built in 1962 to suit the “Ten Pin” style of bowling that was rising in popularity. Within a decade, it attracted the national Professional Bowlers Association Tour. Two male bowlers from Windsor Locks became professionals and were also named to the Professional Bowlers Association Hall of Fame: Larry Lichstein and Pete Couture. Kim Adler rose to the highest ranks of women’s bowling. Sonya and Ken West were instrumental in bringing the pro bowlers tour to Bradley Bowl, and in keeping it there for years. Both Sonya and Ken are in the State and Regional bowling halls of fame.

In the 1990s and 2000s, even Ten Pin bowling was sagging in popularity. Bradley Bowl added new features to attract more people. Then Bradley Bowl was sold to Sparetime Entertainment, which owns 17 entertainment centers, and whose centers include: bowling, gaming arcades, laser tag and paint ball. As is happening across the nation, Bradley Bowl has become a family entertainment center. Such a move was crucial to its survival. Bowling, which has been evolving since at least 3200 BC, continues to evolve and survive.

Sources

Information for this article was provided by Larry Lichstein, Mike Lichstein and Sonya West.

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Windsor Locks Journal ads have the issue listed below them.

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[https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g33987-d4508009-Reviews-Bradley Bowl-Windsor Locks Connecticut.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g33987-d4508009-Reviews-Bradley_Bowl-Windsor_Locks_Connecticut.html)

Larry Lichstein, Professional Bowlers Association,
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Pete Couture, Professional Bowlers Association,
<https://www.pba.com/articles/Cancer-Claims-PBA-Hall-of-Famer-Pete-Couture-at-73>)

Kim Adler, KimAdler.com
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Kim Adler, Wikipedia,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kim_Adler

Sonya West, (Pohorylo-Macierowski), Windsor Locks Sports Hall of Fame,
<http://www.windsorlocks-hof.com/sonya-west-pohoylo-macierowski/>

SpareTime Entertainment,
<http://www.sparetimeentertainment.com/windsor-locks/>

Chapter 13

How Life has Changed in 50 Years, and in a Century

Learning what happened a half century ago, or a century ago in Windsor Locks is fun and useful. Understanding what happened back then is even more useful. That is only possible if we understand the context in which those things happened. It helps to know about how much people were making, what the living conditions were, what the educational practices of the time were. For example, the Main Street Redevelopment happened in the late 1960s, about a half century ago. Many of the buildings on Main St and just behind the front row of buildings had many small, low-rent apartments. Many of the houses were duplexes. They were the lowest rent places to live in Windsor Locks. When Main Street went through redevelopment, the buildings were not rebuilt, so many people had to leave town to find rent that they could afford. The same thing happened to the store owners on Main Street. The owners of the buildings were not charging much rent on those stores. The reason why the Marconi brothers and the Donut Kettle, and Tony's Soda Shoppe didn't want to leave is that they knew they couldn't afford to pay the higher rent that they would have had to, if new buildings were built.

So understanding the incomes that were being made in those years helps in understanding what really happened to all the people who rented the stores and the housing that was demolished and never rebuilt.

If we go back a century to about 1915, it was the era of the immigrants who came to Windsor Locks from Italy, Ireland, Poland and other countries. Knowing the living conditions and housing situations helps in understanding their lives and times.

There were no studies done on living conditions a century ago or a half century ago in Windsor Locks. However, there have been a number of studies done on life in the United States in those two periods. They give us the best information we can get on living in Windsor Locks in those time periods. We will look at two studies of life in the 1915 timeframe, and one of life in the 1965 timeframe. We will look at education, family life, food, health, living costs, travel and other aspects of life a century and a half century ago.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate why and how culture changes over time, but it is well known that two big causes of changes in culture are due to changes in technology, and in the meeting of various cultures, which affect one another.

Understanding the culture and living conditions of those timeframes will help us better understand the historical happenings of those times.

Business Insider magazine had an article entitled "21 Incredible facts about the world 100 years ago," which was published in 2016. Here were their main points.

(<https://www.businessinsider.com/what-life-was-like-100-years-ago-2015-12>)

1900 - Only about half of American child between 5 and 19 years old were enrolled in schools. Ending formal education after eighth grade was typical.

1900 - Life expectancy for American men was only 48.3 years, and 51.1 years for women.

1901 - Connecticut passed the country's first speed limit law - 15 mph on general roads and 12 mph with city limits.

1910 - Average per-capita annual income in the US was \$332, or about \$7,800 in current 2016 dollars.

1910 - Less than half of the people lived in urban areas. Now it is 80%.

1910 - Agriculture was the most common industry in the US. By 1920 it was surpassed by manufacturing. Today, service is the main industry.

1910 - 7.7% of Americans could not read or write.

1913 - The first dedicated gas station in the US opened in Pittsburg. Prior to that, selling gas was a side business in some stores.

1915 - Cocaine had been illegal for about a year, but marijuana was legal and was sold in pharmacies. Doctors could prescribe heroin for their patients, and they could get it at the pharmacy.

1915 - The word "teenager" was not used.

1915 - Women had not yet been given the right to vote.

1915 - Up to then, doctors had been trained haphazardly. Change was slow. The first "real" med school was Johns Hopkins medical school which opened in 1893.

1915 - A dozen eggs cost 34 cents. A gallon of milk cost 18 cents and a pound of coffee cost 30 cents.

1915 - The three leading causes of death in the US were heart disease, pneumonia/influenza, and tuberculosis.

1915 - Canned beer and modern supermarkets had not been invented.

1915 - The US did not have an official national anthem yet.

1938 - The first national minimum wage law was passed: 25 cents/hour.

1940 - The US Census indicated that only about half of US homes had all of the following three things: hot/cold water, a tub or shower, and a flush toilet.

In 2016, the *Atlantic Magazine* did a review of the differences between life in America in 1915 and in 2016. It can be found at:

(<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/02/america-in-1915/462360/>)

Here is a summary of their conclusions.

- For men, manufacturing work averaged 55 hours a week, 10 percent more than in 2016. Work fatalities were 61 deaths per 100,000 workers, versus about 2 today.

- Women were less likely to work outside the home. Many worked as elementary and high school teachers. Women were preferred by school boards because they were more likely to do what their male principals told them to, while accepting less a man's wages.

- The elderly did not have it so good. Social Security did not exist back then. Poverty for the elderly was rampant. They lived with their family, often with three generations of the family living in the house.

- The cost of food was a third of income in 1913, which is twice what it is now. Taking lunch to work was difficult. Now we have plastic bags. Back then, it was recommended that to keep sandwich moist, it should be wrapped in a dry towel covered by a wet towel.

- In 1915, the average American ate about 11.5 pounds of lard and about 14 pounds of chicken a year. Now we eat about 1.5 pounds of lard and 57 pounds of chicken per year. The sugar intake of Americans has jumped from 88 pounds per year in 1915 to 130 pounds now.

- In 1913, the average household was more than four people, while now it is 2.5. Children lived at home until they got married, which was at about the age of 21 for women. Hardly anyone got divorced. Widows moved in with their adult children.

- Very few owned their own home back in 1913. Homes were much cheaper back then but they were a hassle to buy. Home ownership is now about 60%.

- Women had an average of 3 children. About 10 percent died in their first year of life, compared to only one of 168 today. Virtually all births back then were at home.

- In 1913, about half the population was under 25. Now, only a quarter of the population is under 25. At the same time, the percentage of people over 65 tripled from 5% to 15%.

- A "first date" back then was likely to be a conversation in the home of the girl, with the parents in the room, followed by dinner at the girl's house.

- Most of getting from place to place was done by walking in 1913. City dwellers often walked to work. Horses reached their peak usage on farms in 1915. After that, there was a slow transition to tractors.

- In 1915, 30% of homes had a telephone. Less than 20% had a stove. Very few had a refrigerator, and almost none had a radio. Within 60 years, clothes washers, dryers, air-conditioning, and television sets would all be household staples, but in 1915 they were nowhere to be seen.

These last two reviews of early versus current life in America compared current times to times around 1915. Here is another comparison, but it is between life now and life in 1965, about a half century ago.
(<https://www.countryliving.com/life/g5115/how-was-life-50-years-ago/>)

To get cash, you had to go to the bank - In 1968, there were no ATM machines. They were first implemented in London in 1967, but didn't make it to the US until 1969

There were no R-rated movies - The Motion Picture Association of America didn't start using its G, M, R and X rating system until 1968. But, in 1968, we still had the Rialto Theater on Main St.

We hadn't landed on the moon yet - In 1968, the Apollo program's second manned spacecraft orbited the moon and safely returned on Dec. 28, seven months before Apollo 11's actual moon landing.

There was no Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - Dr. King was killed in 1968, but Martin Luther King Day wasn't started until 1986.

Housing discrimination was rampant - President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which was also called the Fair Housing Act, on April 11, 1968, just seven days after King's assassination. The law prohibited discrimination based on race, gender, religion, or national origin when renting or selling a home.

People got married earlier - In 1968, the median age of first marriage was 20 for women and 23 for men. Back then, close to 70 percent of American adults were married. In 2018, only 51 percent are married. The modern bride is 26.5 years old on average and the groom is 28.7.

Presidential Candidates were not protected by the Secret Service - Robert Kennedy was assassinated while running for president in 1968. Then Congress passed a law requiring protection of presidential candidates. After presidential hopeful Sen. Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated on the campaign trail on June 5, 1968, Congress passed legislation calling for Secret Service protection for major presidential candidates.

The Drinking age was 18 - It was raised to 21 in 1984.

Interracial romance couldn't be found on TV - William Shatner and Nichelle Nichols broke that barrier in 1968, in a Star Trek episode.

Seatbelts were not required - The first law that required seatbelts in all new cars happened in 1968, but the first state law requiring their use didn't happen until 1984.

Gas cost 34 cents a gallon - Adjusted for inflation, that is about \$2.48 a gallon, which is close to the 2018 average in the US.

Air Travel was for the wealthy - In 1969, the Boeing 747 was launched, which doubled the number of passengers per plane, and led to a large reduction in the cost of air travel.

911 did not exist - It was in 1968 that 911 became the number to call for an emergency.

Lead-based paint was popular - Lead paint was outlawed in 1978.

Cars did not have airbags - They were invented in 1968.

Heart transplants were not available - The first one in the US was in 1967, and a third of them in that first year did not last three months.

Telephones still had round dials - Pushbutton phones became available in 1963 but didn't become popular until the 1970s.

Telephones had cords - A cordless phone was invented in 1965 but they didn't become popular for home use until the 1980s. The cell phone became available in 1979, and the digital cell phone in 1988.

Local calls were 7 digits - You didn't need to use an area code for local calls until the early 2000s

Getting a credit card was very easy - They were often sent to you in the mail, even when you hadn't requested them. The "Unsolicited Credit Card Act" of 1970 ended that practice.

Chicken Pox killed 100 children a year - A vaccine was developed in 1995. Up to then, calamine lotion was the only treatment.

Catholics could use the birth control pill - That ended in 1968.

No president had ever resigned - Nixon became the first.

Soda cans had pull tabs - The push-through can top started in 1975.

Cigarette ads were prevalent on TV - That came to an end in 1970.

Lenders could discriminate based on gender or race - The Equal Opportunity Credit Act of 1974 outlawed that.

Folks didn't worry about skin cancer - Although sunscreen creams had been invented in the 1940s, they had an SPF of below 10. The FDA proposed the first sunscreen guidelines in 1975.

Builders still used asbestos - The EPA ban on asbestos did not occur until 1973.

Getting kids to take vitamins was difficult - Although Flintstone were sold in 1968, the gummy vitamins, which became popular with kids, didn't come around until 1997.

Millions suffered from untreated depression - Prozac entered the market in 1987. Since then more than 35 million people have taken Prozac to combat depression.

The Internet hadn't been invented - ARPAnet, which was invented for the government to use if the telephones failed, sent its first message in 1969. The internet became public in 1991.

Quickly getting rid of fat was not easy - Liposuction started in 1974.

Lots of people wore eyeglasses - Although contact lenses were available, the more comfortable soft contact lenses were not available until 1971.

Walmart was still a “Mom and Pop” store - The Waltons had 24 stores in 1967. They went public in 1970.

“Made in China” items were hard to find - The Korean War had put a freeze on US-China trade and travel until the early 1970s, when Nixon reestablished diplomatic relations with China

There were only three major TV networks - ABC, CBS and NBC were the only ones until Fox came along in 1986. But Fox wasn’t considered a major network until 1994.

Iran was America’s ally - Diplomatic relations crumbled with the revolution in 1979, which overthrew the pro-American Shah, and installed the anti-American Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini.

The US was at war with Vietnam - The US left Vietnam in 1975, after a 19 year war.

The Draft was still active - The draft was in force from 1940 until 1973. The environment was an afterthought - The Environmental Protection Agency was not formed until 1970.

Bottled water was not popular - Americans preferred soda and beer. Perrier launched a massive advertising campaign to attract the Baby Boomers.

The Senate had never had a black woman as a member - Carol Moseley Braun was the first black woman elected to the Senate in 1992.

Radio was the only means of portable music - The portable cassette player was developed in 1972.

Conclusion

We looked at the culture (living conditions) of a century ago and of a half century ago to help us better understand the things we study in the history of Windsor Locks. Knowing the culture of those times provides a context for understanding the events of those times.

Sources

21 Incredible Facts About the World 100 Years Ago, Business Insider Magazine, January 4, 2016.

(<https://www.businessinsider.com/what-life-was-like-100-years-ago-2015-12>)

What Life was like 50 Years Ago, Country Living, January 8, 2016.

(<https://www.countryliving.com/life/g5115/how-was-life-50-years-ago/>)

Chapter 14

Eighteen Windsor Locks Businesses of the 1900s

A number of Windsor Locks stores and businesses have their own chapters in this volume, and in the first volume of *Windsor Locks History*. This chapter briefly covers 18 more Windsor Locks businesses. They were locally owned, locally operated businesses. They include eateries, gas stations, markets, and a few larger businesses such as a coal yard, a brick manufacturer, a car dealer, and a junkyard. Photographs help visualize each of them.

There is a reason to group these businesses into a single chapter. When you scan through their photos and read the brief write-ups, you get a good idea of what a small, blue collar town in Connecticut felt like in the middle of the 1900s.

Those who become interested in any one of the businesses in this chapter can easily delve into their history. The availability of newspaper archives on the internet make this easy. The *Windsor Locks Journal* archives, which are available at <http://windsorlocks.advantage-preservation.com/>, are the best and easiest way to get that information.

The Pine Meadow Restaurant

Below is a 1950s photo of the Pine Meadow Restaurant, which was on South Main Street. This was not a fast food place. It served excellent meals.



Pine Meadow Restaurant, S. Main St. 1950s

Weddings and other large parties were held there. Stanley F. Pikul, who was born in Austria/Poland, owned the restaurant from 1957 to 1959. Before that, he was a toolmaker at Pratt & Whitney Tool Co. in West Hartford, from which he retired in 1955. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, June 20, 1974)

Below is an ad for the Pine Meadow Restaurant that was in the *Windsor Locks Journal* in 1948, and a photo of the restaurant during the 1955 flood.



Restaurant ad in Windsor Locks Journal, 1948



Pine Meadow Restaurant, Flood of 1955

Dan Leach's Coal Yard

On the right side of Main Street, where the Windsor Locks Commons sits, Dan Leach's Coal and Ice Yard used to stand. The book "Coal Men of America" has a short writeup that says: "Daniel F. Leach, retail coal merchant of Windsor

Locks, Connecticut, has been there for five years. He was formerly with the L. H. Barrett & Co. of Hartford. He was born in Hartford, Connecticut in December, 1877.” (Source #1)

Originally, that coal yard was owned by Mr. L. H. Barrett of Windsor Locks. His son, James L. Barrett and Daniel F. Leach took over when L. H. Barrett died. (Source # 2)

Back in the 1940s, many families heated their homes with coal. The coal truck would pull up in your driveway, and a chute would send the coal through a window in your basement, into a coal bin.

Below are two photos of Dan Leach’s Coal Yard from January of 1965.



Dan Leach's Coal Yard 1965



Dan Leach's Coal Yard 1965

The Tydol Gas Station and Bowers Shoe Store

Just south of Leach's Coal Yard was the Tydol gas station and Bowers Shoe Store. In the following picture, you can also see Bidwell's Lumber Yard across the street.



**Tydol Gas Station and Bowers Shoe Shop
Main St., just south of Dan Leach's Coal Yard**

Bidwell's Lumber Yard

Across the street from Dan Leach's Coal Yard, at the bottom of Chestnut Street, was the Bidwell Lumber Company building. Below is a 1956 photo of Bidwell's Lumber Yard.



Bidwell Lumber Co. Main St. 1956

The Bidwell Lumber Yard would be hard to imagine in more modern times. The photo shows the building on the right is an open 3-sided building. There

were a number of these open 3-sided buildings on the property. Those buildings were fully stocked but they had no doors. In modern times, no business would have their wares in three-sided, unlocked buildings, because it would invite theft. There was a reason those buildings were open on one side. They held lumber. Back then, the lumber was not dried in massive driers before being delivered to the retail store. Back then, the lumber probably had to have air circulating around it to let it dry.

Bidwell's had two stores on Main Street. This store sold lumber. Their other store, which was on Main Street, between Spring St. and Oak St. sold hardware, sporting goods, hunting and fishing equipment. It was also the place where Windsor Locks residents went to pay their monthly electric bill. When you did that, you usually brought your burned out light bulbs with you, because you could exchange them there for new bulbs at no cost. The hardware store closed in 1959, but they kept the lumber yard going. (*Springfield Union*, March 6, 1959)

Billy Stone's School Bus Garage

Billy Stone lived on the corner of Grove and Center Streets. He owned and cared for the school busses. He kept them in a garage right next to his house. He gave it up when the school system got too large for him to handle. Below is a photo of his garage.



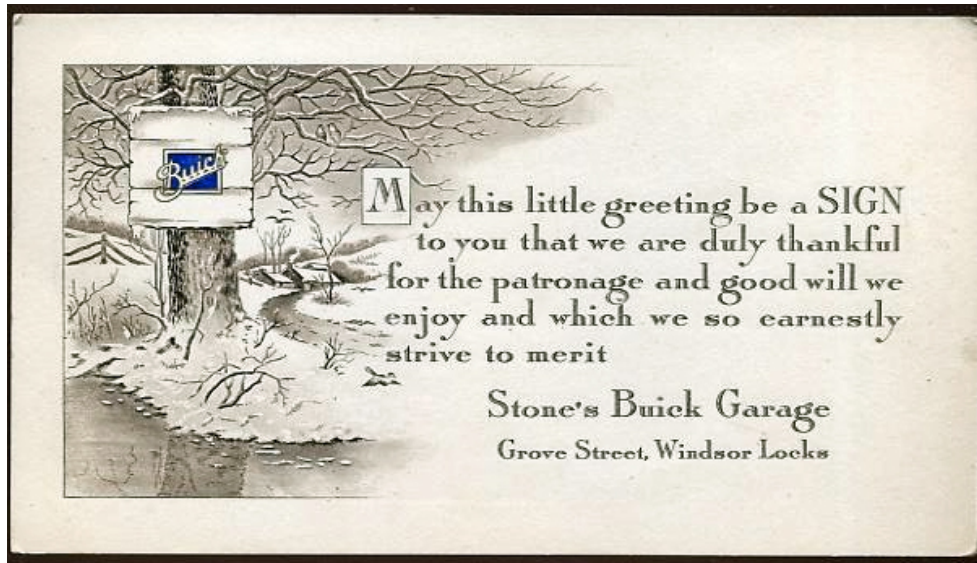
**Billy Stone's School Bus Garage
Corner of Grove and Center Sts. 1950s/60s**

Billy Stone was inducted into the Windsor Locks Sports Hall of Fame. He played semi-pro football for an Enfield team, and was instrumental in developing youth hockey during the late 1950s and early 1960s in Windsor Locks. He was an excellent mentor to the town's youth, and instilled the basic fundamentals of good sportsmanship and ingenuity. For example, few had the money for hockey skates and protective equipment, but Coach Stone always had a supply of old Life magazines and duct tape in his car that he would wrap around the boy's shins to act as pads.

Before that building was Billy Stone's School Bus Garage, it was Louis L. Stone's Buick Garage. Below is an interesting ad from the Nov. 16, 1923 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* for Stone's Buick Garage. Below that is an advertising card from that era.

"After breakfast," remarked Foxy Grandpa, "we will go out and buy your outfit, and as I promised you an auto as one of your first presents upon your arrival here, we will lose no time in calling on Louis L. Stone at Stone's Garage, where I will present you with a handsome Buick Sedan. The Buick Co. have certainly lived up to their slogan, 'When better cars are built, Buick will build them, this year especially. I don't want to go with any high-sounding phrases as applied to motor cars; they are all too common and their force is lost. They convey no thought, other than the importance of the user. But the comeliness of design, the solidity of structure, the economy of upkeep and operation, the ease and comfort in driving, and lastly, the intimate integrity of the whole as exemplified in this swell Buick before you, settled it with me, and you ought to be pleased." "We are," said both in chorus; "we will surely be proud of our car and come to Stone's Buick Garage for all our accessories, the complete Buick service, and storage as we want it. You will like the treatment and service accorded you at Stone's Buick Garage."

Windsor Locks Journal
Nov. 16, 1923



Ad for Stone's Buick Garage ~1923

Emma Fisher's Esso Station

Emma "Ma" Fisher ran a unique gas station at the corner of Old County Road and Elm Street. Local kids went there for penny candy. She had a little kitchen and made food for customers. She also sold used automobile oil for about 20 cents a quart, which she got from the oil changes done at the gas station. It should be pointed out that Frank's Diner was just to the left of the gas station. Here is a photo.



**Emma "Ma" Fisher's Esso Station
Old County Road & Elm Street**

The Windsor Locks Brick Co.

The Windsor Locks Brick Co. existed until 1943 in the area between North Street, Whiton Street, Wicklow Street and Center Street. There were two entrances. One was from Wicklow Street and the other was from Center Street. The *Springfield Republican* had two ads by the Windsor Locks Brick Co in 1937. The *Windsor Locks Journal* had 40 articles or ads on the Windsor Locks Brick Co. between 1924 and 1933. Then they had a single ad, which can be seen below, referring to the liquidation of the Windsor Locks Brick Yard. All of the ads listed North Street as the address, so they were the same place. The span of their business was the 1920s to 1943.

Liquidating Brick Yard
Quantity of Cedar Posts, 20 ft. long,
large lot of 4x8 Timbers, steel Shaft-
ing, wire Cable, steel Pulleys of all
kinds; also cord wood. Windsor Locks
Brick Yard, North St., Windsor Locks.
Windsor Locks Journal, Nov. 4, 1943

The *Windsor Locks Journal* of Nov. 23, 1948 had the obituary of Henry Mandirola, who came to Windsor Locks from Italy in 1904. He worked at Dexter's. He was in dairy farming and tobacco growing. He was one of the organizers of the Windsor Locks Brick Company, and also of the Palace Theater, which was the theater on second floor of a brick building on Grove St, near Main Street. Much later the building was known as "Blanche's Bowling Alley".

Below is a photo of a brick made by the Windsor Locks Brick. Co.



Louie's Market

Louie's Market, which was also called "the Elm General Market" and "the Elm Street Market," was a Windsor Locks landmark for years. It was similar to the other neighborhood markets such as Sisitzky's, Johnny's, Aldo's and Bert's Market. Each had its own personality and specialties, and each served the area around them. Louie's Market had a couple of apartments attached to it. See photo below.



Elm General Market (Louie's Market) 1966

Buzzy's Restaurant

There was a place on South Main Street called Buzzy's Restaurant. However, There were 28 articles in the *Windsor Locks Journal* between 1961 and 1963, which mentioned Buzzy's Restaurant. All of them were about their bowling team. Charlie "Skif" Africano won Buzzy's Restaurant in a card game. The place had informal food, such as hot dogs, hamburgers and soft drinks.



Buzzy's Restaurant, South Main Street

Mid-Town Motors

You had to know where Mid-Town Motors was in order to get there. Their parking lot was on Grove Street, across from Blanche's Bowling Alley. The other way to get to it was to take the driveway between Coly's Hotel and Sy Bianchi's News Stand up to the garage. Below is a photo that was taken in 1971, after most of the businesses along Main Street had closed for the Main Street Redevelopment project. Mid Town Motors stayed open longer. Before it was owned by Mid-Town Motors, the repair shop was owned by Adolph Fournier.



Driveway between Colapietro's Hotel and Sy Bianchi's News Stand. Midtown Motors at top. 1971, after the hotel, and the news stand had closed for Main Street "redevelopment"

The parking lot for Mid Town Motors was on Grove St., across the street from Blanche's Bowling Alley. See photo below.



Mid Town Motors parking lot on Grove Street

Len Thrall's "Flying A" Gas Station and the 707 Drive In

Brands of gasoline have changed over the decades. The Flying A brand ended in 1966. Len Thrall's Flying A gas station was at Turnpike Rd. and Spring St. The name of the restaurant next door was the "707 Drive In," which may have an aviation reference in its name. Here is a photo of both businesses.



Len Thrall's Gas Station & the 707 Drive In

The following ad for the gas station shows how time has changed. They used to give S&H Green Stamps.

The Public Is Invited

To Visit the New FLYING A Service Station
Cor. Spring St. and Turnpike Road, Windsor Locks
Now OPEN FOR BUSINESS

FEATURING



Flying A Gasoline—Motor Oils—Greases—Lubrication
Batteries—Accessories

WE ARE AGENTS FOR ALA ROAD SERVICE
FREE PICK-UP AND DELIVERY

Just Call NA 3-7409

—WE GIVE S&H GREEN STAMPS—

Len, Larry and All the Boys Are Here to Welcome You!
They All Extend Their Thanks for Past Patronage
and Are Ready to Serve You in Their New Quarters

LEN THRALL FLYING A SERVICE STATION
COR. TURNPIKE ROAD and SPRING ST. WINDSOR LOCKS
TELEPHONE: NA 3-7409

Windsor Locks Journal, 10 5 1961

The Windsor Locks Bakery

The Windsor Locks Bakery has existed in Windsor Locks since the 1880s. For a while in the 1900s, it was owned by Attilio Barberi and James and Nataline Tambussi. The store was on Spring Street. According to the *Windsor Locks Journal* issue of April 20, 1934, Mr. Barberi sold out his share, and the Tambussi family owned it. That continued for quite a while.

The Windsor Locks Bakery had a great recipe for Crumb Cake. The students at St. Mary's School in the 1950s and early 1960s used to go to St. Mary's Church for Mass on the first Friday of every month. When they got back to school after mass, they were served Crumb Cake from the Windsor Locks Bakery. It was a best-seller at their store. Below is a photo of Leo Montemerlo that has the Windsor Locks Bakery in the background. That is the only photo of the store that could be found. Below the photo is an ad for the bakery.



**Leo Montemerlo in front of Tambussi's
Windsor Locks Bakery ~1940**

The Windsor Locks Bakery
Noted for its variety of Breads

Raisin Bread—

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
Swedish Rye and Whole Wheat

Every day

Try our Cinnamon Crullers

Orders filled and delivered

Try Our Home-made Bread

Windsor Locks Bakery

7 SPRING STREET

TAMBUSSI BROS., Props.

Telephone 297

Windsor Locks Journal, 09 14 1934

Dominick Tria's Bike Shop

After he returned home from service in World War II, Dominick Tria opened a bicycle shop on Oak Street, nears the side of the current Senior Center. Dom was an avid ice skater, motorcycle racer and bicycle rider.



Dominick Tria's Bike Shop

Robert Taylor's Junkyard

Robert Taylor had a junkyard on South Center Street back in the 1950s. Take a look at the closeup of the junked cars in his lot. They would be worth a large amount of money today. Below are two photos.



Robert Taylor Junkyard, South Center St. 1954



Robert Taylor's Junkyard, South Center St. 1954

William (Hoisty) Asselin's News Stand

Hoisty Asselin ran his well known news stand on Main Street for years. Kids with paper routes would go down and pick up their papers at Hoisty's News Stand. Later, Charland's Pharmacy was built after Hoisty's News Stand was torn down. See photo below.



**Windsor Locks News -
William J. (Hoisty) Asselin**

Park Chevrolet

It was very difficult to find any photo of Park Chevrolet. Park Chevrolet was mentioned in the *Windsor Locks Journal* 1,693 times between 1936 and 1965. Almost all of them were advertisements, but they didn't include a photo of the building. The best that could be found was a 1956 photo that Charlie Carroll took of his six year old sister, Christine. You can see a part of the Park Chevrolet building in the upper right hand corner of the photo. Charlie remembers taking it with a brand new Kodak camera that he had just gotten. Their father was Jim Carroll, owner of Carroll's Pharmacy and Windsor Locks Fire Chief.

Park Chevrolet was owned and operated by John L. Quagliaroli, from 1936 to 1965, (*Springfield Union*, June 18, 1981.) Park Chevrolet was a well known Windsor Locks landmark on North Main Street, near Dr. Carniglia's home and office.



**Park Chevrolet at upper right.
Christine Carroll, 1956**

Like so many Windsor Locks business owners, John Quagliaroli was a civic leader. He had been President of the Rotary Club and of the Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the Knights of Columbus. He was also a well known horseman. He was a president of the Connecticut Morgan Horse Association.

Park Chevrolet was started just a short time after the Stock Market Crash of 1929. That took a great amount of courage. John Quagliaroli made it work, and kept it working for almost three decades.

Below is an advertisement for Park Chevrolet from the June 7, 1940, *Windsor Locks Journal*. Notice the prices of used cars at that time.

Special This Week — 1939 FORD COUPE with Gasoline Heater, New Car Guarantee \$565	
1938 Pontiac Sedan Radio and Heater <hr/> 1937 Chevrolet Sedan Radio and Heater <hr/> 1936 Plymouth Sedan Motor Overhauled <hr/> 1937 Chevrolet Canopy A clean looking job In good condition	1939 Plymouth Sedan With Heater—Good Tires <hr/> 1938 Chevrolet Coupe Four Passenger Radio, Heater, Seat Covers Deluxe Equipment <hr/> 1939 Pontiac Sedan With Radio and Heater Three 1931 Chevrolet Sedans Priced from \$25 up
A Real Bargain — 1937 CHEVROLET SEDAN New Paint, A1 Condition \$378	
FOR A BETTER USED CAR VALUE... SEE YOUR CHEVROLET DEALER Today!	
PARK CHEVROLET COMPANY JOHN L. QUAGLIAROLI, Prop. NORTH MAIN STREET Phone 375 WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.	

Windsor Locks Journal, June 7, 1940

Conclusion

Eighteen examples of Windsor Locks businesses of the mid 1900s were shown. Together, they portray life in a small, blue-collar town in Connecticut in the 1900s, with most being in the mid 1900s. They were locally owned, and locally operated. Townspeople knew the owners. The existence of small, locally owned businesses was a thing of the time. Eventually, large national chains of stores became the fashion, as they had an enormous amount of leverage in selling at a lower price by buying larger quantities.

Sources

1. Coal Men of America, Arthur M. Hull and Sidney A Hale, The Retail Coalman, 1938.
2. The Coal Trade Journal, Volume 46, January 1, 1914. Frederich E. Saward, Editor, 20 Vesey Street, New York.
3. Obituary of John L. Quagliaroli. *Springfield Union*, June 18, 1981.

Chapter 15

Ray Roncari: A Windsor Locks Original



Pfc. Raymond A. Roncari

Introduction

If you lived in Windsor Locks between the 1940s and the 1990s, you are well acquainted with the name “Ray Roncari”. He was a war hero, a businessman, a family man, a civic leader, a religious man, a horse breeder/racer and a philanthropist.

Ray was the son of Italian immigrants in a small town in Connecticut. Through hard work, determination, and an extraordinary set of values, Ray Roncari and his family flourished. He left a mark on Windsor Locks that will never be forgotten. He did it in a unique manner. He was a Windsor Locks “Original”. This is his story.

Ray Roncari’s Parents Emigrate from Italy to Windsor Locks

Ray was the son of Guido Roncari, who emigrated to the United States from the small town of Brebbia, in the far north of Italy. Guido Roncari arrived at Ellis Island on the ship, Moltke, on April 20, 1906. He travelled alone, leaving his family in Italy. He had married his wife, Josephine, in 1902. They had their first child, Mary, in 1905. Guido returned to Italy sometime before 1910. He and Josephine had two more children, Ida in 1911 and Angelo in 1912.

The 1920 US Census listed Guido as a boarder in the home of Umberto Pesci on 6 Spring Street in Windsor Locks. The 1920 US Census does not show any listings for Guido’s wife or children, but it does list Guido’s occupation

as “Cobbler,” and said that he was working in a shoe repair shop. Given that he was living in Umberto Pesci’s home, and Mr. Pesci ran a shoe repair shop, we can assume that he was working in Mr. Pesci’s shoe repair shop on the North corner of Spring St. and Main St. Later, this was the building that housed the Marconi Brother’s Luncheonette.



***Umberto Pesci’s Shoe Repair Shop entrance
was on Spring St. side of the building***

Guido and Josephine had two more children after they arrived in Windsor Locks. Albert was born in 1921, and Raymond was born on March 24, 1924.

In the 1930 Census, Guido, Josephine, Angelo, Albert and Raymond were shown as living at 83 West Street. That same address is given for the family in Guido’s 1931 Naturalization certificate. The Naturalization document listed Mary as living in Italy, and Ida as living in New Britain. The 1930 US Census lists Guido’s occupation as “Laborer” and he was working on “State Highways”.

Ray’s Grammar School Years (1930-1939)

Ray entered Windsor Locks Elementary School in 1930 and graduated in 1938. His name was in the *Windsor Locks Journal* at least a dozen times while he was in grammar school, and even more often when he was in high school.

When Ray was seven years old, he rescued six year old Buster White from drowning. Buster fell into the ice pond on North Street, and landed face down. Ray waded into the water and pulled the youngster to the bank of the pond where adults who lived nearby took him home. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, May 23, 1930)

Ray wasn't absent from school much. He was given perfect attendance awards five times in eight years.

Ray developed a love of performing on-stage at an early age. Here are examples while he was in elementary school:

- He was in a second grade play, "In a Toy Shop".
 - He was a member of the chorus in the operetta "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" in fourth grade.
 - He was in the chorus of the musical "Rose of the Danube" in sixth grade.
- Ray graduated from eighth grade in the Class of 1938.

Ray's High School Years (1939-1943)

St. Mary's Cub Pack No. 7 was formed in 1939. Ray was one of five Boy Scouts who chosen to be Den Chiefs for the Cub Scout Pack.

Ray was listed in the following issues of the *Windsor Locks Journal* as having made the honor roll: April 28, 1939, April 3, 1941, July 2, 1941, and Dec. 11, 1941.

Ray kept up his interest in participating in plays and musicals while in high school. He:

- was a member of the chorus in a patriotic Memorial Day ceremony,
- read "Father of our Country" in a Washington's Day ceremony,
- sang "Everlasting Light" in a 1940 Christmas program,
- was a soloist a minstrel show in 1941.
- sang in a quartet in the 1941 Memorial Day ceremony,
- read his award winning essay in a 1941 essay contest,
- participated in the Armistice Day program in 1941,
- was in the St. Mary's Dramatic Club play "Peg O' My Heart" (1942),
- gave a talk on "The Youth of Today" on Class Night (1942),
- acted in the comedy "The Bells of Shannon".

Ray graduated from Windsor Locks Public High School in 1943.

Ray's Time in the Army (1943-1945)

The following young men, who attended Windsor Locks High School, signed up for military service: Francis Barberi, Francis Christian, John Carnevale, **Raymond Roncari**, Nelson Magliora, George Harvey, Jr., John Albani, John Beczynski, William Kuczynski, Andrew Gaudette, Jr., and Thaddeus Poyorylo. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, April 15, 1943)

After joining the Army, Ray wrote the following letter, which was in the *Windsor Locks Journal* of May 27, 1943. He recounts his experiences.

Editor The Journal;

This communique is from a home town boy, training in South Carolina to be an Infantry soldier. From what I have previously heard and thus far personally experienced, the Infantry in some ways, has changed very little. I have been on numerous marches and have frequently dug slit trenches. Bayonet and rifle practice has also been a part of my training.

Other than training, marching, doing special detail, casing and maintaining equipment, participating in field problems, attending lectures, standing formations, being on KP and table waiter, and cleaning of rifles, I have not too much to do.

The part of the training that calls for hitting the dirt is quite different here from what it would be back home because the entire terrain, including hills, roads and trenches, consists only of hard red clay.

I wish to extend to you my thanks and appreciation for sending me The Journal. My address is enclosed as I would like to hear from anyone, in or out of town, who may wish and have time to drop me a line.

With regards to The Journal staff and to all Windsor Locks, I am

—Pvt. Raymond A. Roncari,
Camp Croft, S. C.

The October 28, 1943 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* said that the newspaper was being mailed every week to several hundred boys and girls from Windsor Locks and nearby communities who are in the military. The newspaper listed those who are making contributions to make this happen. While many were living in town, a number of military personnel were also sending in contributions. They included Ray Roncari and his brother Angelo.

The December 16, 1943 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* contained a letter to the Editor from Private R. A. Roncari who was "Somewhere in Italy". Ray sounded happy. Here is the letter.

Mud In Italy

Editor The Journal:

"Sunny Italy," that is what we used to call it. Now it has been raining steady here for a week and the winter clothes are coming right in handy. A sequence of all this rain is mud. Italian mud is a rich, creamy mixture resembling chocolate ice cream. It can be used as a substitute for glue, and makes excellent mud pies which are sold on the streets under the name of peanut brittle. It is also put into small round cans and dispensed by shoeshine boys as American polish. Once in a while someone makes a mistake and the sun does shine. This is the signal for the children to come running out of their houses shouting "Coramelli! Coramelli!"

When last I wrote to you, I was training at Camp Croft to be an infantry soldier. At present I am putting into practice all that I have learned, and as a matter of fact, I am still learning although under different circumstances.

My knowledge of the Italian language has helped me immensely, especially in getting hold of something to eat, and that is something.

As yet I have not received any mail overseas, but I am looking forward to my copies of The Journal, which I know are on the way.

To The Journal staff I wish to send my best wishes for a Happy and Blessed Christmas holiday. May this greeting extend also to the people of the best little town on earth, Windsor Locks.

—Private R. A. Roncari,
"Somewhere in Italy"

The December 30, 1943 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* had a letter to the editor from PFC Michael Gubala of Windsor Locks. He mentions Ray. These letters makes it seem like the hometown newspaper was a two-way communication instrument for them.

The Journal In Italy

Editor The Journal:

Just yesterday I received the second copy of my home paper, *The Windsor Locks Journal*, and I want to thank you for sending it to me as it keeps us boys in tabs with what is going on back at home, and also keeps us in touch with other buddies of whose whereabouts we do not know.

In the copy just received I noted in the column "Our Boys and Girls In Service" the letter I had written to my family from Sicily. Since then, of course, the war has progressed a little and I am now in Italy. It is not much different than Sicily, but it is neater and more up-to-date than the island. It is quite mountainous here and the weather is mild, and one can generally stay outside without heavy clothing.

There are a few other Windsor Locks boys here—Joe Sherlock, John McKenna, the Quaglini boy and the **Roncari** lad who joined our outfit a short while ago. All in all it is a pretty good showing of fighting men from the old home town.

In closing I hope that I continue to receive *The Journal* regularly, and wishing you all continued success.

PFC Michael Gubala,
"Somewhere In Italy"

In the "Personals" section of the January 6, 1944 *Windsor Locks Journal*, Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari stated that they were notified that Ray had been wounded. Here is that article.

Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street received word Tuesday from the war department that their son, Private Raymond A. **Roncari**, has been wounded in action with army forces in Italy. The extent of the young soldier's injuries is not known at this time, and the family is anxiously awaiting further word from the war department. He has been overseas with the U. S. Army the past six months, and from word received recently from him, he took part in the invasion of Sicily and moved from there into Italy.

The January 27, 1944 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* said that Raymond Roncari was one of 438 local boys and girls who were in the active military. It was part of a War Bond Rally.

The January 27, 1944 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* had a heartwarming article in the Personals section.

Personals

Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street were feted at a dinner last Tuesday evening at the home of their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Angelo Roncari of Suffield street in honor of their forty-second wedding anniversary. The couple received many appropriate gifts in honor of the occasion. During the day, flowers were received from their sons, Private Raymond A. Roncari, who is stationed with the armed forces somewhere in Italy, and Sergeant Albert Roncari in the South Pacific. The occasion was a two-fold celebration for Mrs. Roncari who observed her sixtieth birthday on the same date.

The February 3, 1944 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* tells the story of Ray Roncari's heroic actions for which he was cited for gallant action. That article is below.

Windsor Locks Boy Cited For Gallant Action

Reports from the 45th Infantry Division of the U. S. Army now engaged at the war front in Italy tell of an incident involving Private Raymond A. Roncari, son of Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street. By using his sharp eyes, he enabled two of his officers to do some sharpshooting recently along the Fifth Army front.

While patrolling with two officers of his division, Private Roncari spied a German behind a rock on an adjoining ridge. Borrowing the officer's field glasses, he climbed high up in the tree where he got a good view of a German camp across the valley. He then reported to the officers below the exact location of various German soldiers and directed their fire as they opened up.

With Private Roncari calling the shots after each round, the officers, guided almost entirely by his observations, picked off several of the Germans before they could evacuate the area.

The February 17, 1944 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* said that the citation for bravery mentioned in the previous article was the Purple Heart.

Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street have received from their son, Private Raymond A. Roncari, the Purple Heart decoration that was recently bestowed upon him by the war department, for injuries he received in the invasion of Sicily. He has fully recuperated from his injuries and returned to active service with his army unit in Italy.

The March 2, 1944 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* contains a letter to the Editor from PFC Fred W. Gerish who is "Somewhere in the Central Pacific," which says Hello to Ray and Al Roncari, who he has lost touch with. These letters to the Editor really give an insight into the thinking of the boys from town who were deep into the war. Here is the letter.

SS Editor The Journal:

Having left the scene of Tarawa some time ago and moved to another base, I have had the copies of The Journal for the past two months finally catch up with me, and believe me they sure did get a good reading over.

I want to thank you all back home for making it possible for us boys and girls to get the home paper. I showed it to some folks back in New Zealand and they said it was really a swell paper and that it was jolly good of you to send it to the folks who are in the service from Windsor Locks and surrounding towns.

Through your paper I would like to say "Hello" to Al and Ray Roncari of whom I have lost track the past few months.

Well, good luck for now and hope to be back in the good old home town soon.

—PFC Fred W. Gerish,
"In The Central Pacific"

The March 30, 1944 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* says that Ray Roncari is missing in action and may be a prisoner of war. The article below gives the details.

Local Soldier Missing In Action

Raymond Roncari Serving With Army Forces On Italian Invasion Front, May Be Prisoner Of War. Had Previously Been Wounded And Was In Hospital Last December

Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street received word last Saturday from the war department that their son, Pfc. Raymond A. Roncari is reported as missing in action in the Italian theatre of war. He has been on active duty there with American forces and was attached to the 45th Division that has seen much action in that area.

He was slightly wounded in action in Italy last December and recuperated at one of the army hospitals there. He was awarded the Purple Heart decoration by the war department and this was mailed home by the young soldier to his parents, being received here the early part of February.

Returning to active duty with his unit on February 14th, Pvt. Roncari is reported as missing in action since February 18th, according to word from the war department. The family here is anxiously awaiting further word to the effect that he is again attached to his company, or that he is a prisoner of war.

The young soldier was born in this town and is a graduate of Windsor Locks high school and was a popular member of St Mary's Dramatic Club, having taken part in several plays presented here during the past five years by that organization. He entered army service in March, 1943 and sailed with American forces for overseas duty last July. Previous to leaving for the service, he was engaged with his brother, Angelo Roncari, in the construction business in this town.

The June 8, 1944 *Windsor Locks Journal* reported that Guido Roncari had received word that his son was a prisoner of war.

Local Boy Prisoner Of War

Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street received word this week from the war department that their son, PFC Raymond A. Roncari, has been reported as taken prisoner by Nazi forces in Italy.

The young soldier was reported as missing in action with army forces in Italy several weeks ago and his family in this town has been anxiously awaiting further word. He has been overseas the past year and was slightly wounded during the invasion of Sicily, being awarded the Purple Heart decoration at the time. After being hospitalized he moved into Italy with the invasion forces and was reported as missing in action only a few days after his return to active duty.

The November 16, 1944 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* reported that Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari have received a letter from Raymond who was in a German prisoner of war camp. The article below continues on the next page.

Raymond Roncari Writes From German Prison Camp

Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street have received a letter from their son, Pfc Raymond A. Roncari, who was captured by the Germans in Italy several months ago and is now a prisoner of war in one of the Nazi camps. Being restricted as to the amount of mail he can send from that point, he is unable to write to friends back home but would welcome letters from here, his address being as follows: PFC Raymond A. Roncari, United States P. O. W., No. 132437, Stalag II B, Germany.

ISS The letter to his parents in part is as follows:

"Words cannot express my joy in being able to write to you at last. Unfortunately, I am now a prisoner of war. However, I am in good health, and I realize how you all must have worried because I did not write.

There is a limit on the mail. I can write but not on the mail that I may receive. Therefore, pass my address around to friends with a kind request that they drop me a line. It will mean a lot to get mail here. Please inquire at the local Red Cross about packages that may be sent to me. They will be able to give you all the information needed.

'Please write and let me know what is going on at home, and don't worry any more about me for I am all right. Remember me to the priests of our parish. Just you all keep your chins up, it cannot be long now.

Kindest regards to all my friends, for to them I am unable to write. A sincere blessing to you all at home."

The January 25, 1945 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* reported a letter that Ray sent to his parents.

Little News At Prison Camp

Pfc. Raymond A. Roncari, son of Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street, who is a prisoner of war in a German prison camp, has written home that he receives very little news from home because of only a few letters being received, and he invites friends from the home front to write him.

His address as given in a recent letter to his parents is: Raymond A. Roncari 132437, Subsidiary Camp No 1F13, German Prison Camp, Deutschland (Allemagne.)

He was captured by the Nazis in Italy last year, and while his exact whereabouts are not known, he has been able to correspond by mail with folks at home.

The *Windsor Locks Journal* of Feb. 2, 1945, which is below, says that Ray had been freed by the Russians. In a phone call to me, Joe Calsetta said Ray told him that he had escaped from the Prisoner of War camp, and the Russians helped him return to the American lines.

Local Prisoner Of War Released In Russian Drive

Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street have received word from the American Red Cross that their son, Pfc Raymond A. Roncari, who has been a prisoner of war in Germany the past twelve months, is one of a group who have been released as prisoners by the Russians who are making such sweeping gains across eastern Germany.

He has been overseas the past twenty months, was wounded in action at Sicily, and received the Purple Heart decoration. A second son of Mr. and Mrs. Roncari, Sgt. Albert Roncari, who has been with the army in the Far East the past two years, is on his way home from that area on furlough, according to word received from him this week.

The next word about Ray was that he would be on a special radio broadcast by Americans who had been freed from the German prisoner of war camp named "Oflag". (*Windsor Locks Journal*, April 19, 1945)

Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street have received word that a special radio broadcast will be given next Monday evening over radio station WTHT, which will include messages from United States soldiers who were prisoners of war at the Nazi camp Oflag. in Germany. Persons in this town will be interested in the broadcast as PFC Raymond A. Roncari son of Mr. and Mrs. Roncari had been a prisoner of war at that camp until many of the prisoners were liberated several weeks ago when that section was taken over by the Russians in their drive toward Berlin. The radio program is being presented in charge of Henry Soderberg, neutral Y secretary, who spent several months at that prison camp.

Ray returns to Windsor Locks after the war

Ray was back in the United States in early June 1945, after 31 months of active duty with the United States Army. *Windsor Locks Journal*, May 17, 1945)

Former Nazi Prisoner Reaches This Country

Pfc Raymond A. Roncari, son of Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street, has arrived in this country with a group of soldiers who have been liberated from one of the German prison camps by the Russians, in their sweep across eastern Germany toward Berlin.

The young soldier was captured by the Nazis in Italy, in February, 1944, and liberated by the Russians in March of this year. Following liberation he was sent to one of the Allies rest camps, and from there to this country. His mother received a telephone call from him from New Jersey Tuesday night, and he advised her that he expected to reach his home in this town in a few days.

Another son of Mr. and Mrs. Roncari, Sgt. Albert Roncari of the U. S. Marines, arrived back in this country two weeks ago after thirty-one months of active service with the Marines in the Southwest Pacific war area. He is at his home on a thirty-day leave.

Soon after he got back to Windsor Locks, Pfc. Raymond Roncari and Pfc. Francis Colli gave talks at the High School Memorial Day program (*Windsor Locks Journal*, May 31, 1945). A bond rally was held at the Rialto Theater. Ray gave a talk and answered questions about how he was captured at the beachhead at Anzio, and the long forced marches he had to endure as a prisoner of war. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, June 6, 1945)

In July 1945, Ray was sent to Lake Placid to be processed, and to get a physical examination. He also got to enjoy the entertainment facilities at the Club. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, July 26, 1945) Back in Windsor Locks, a collection was being taken up to build a swimming pool at the Public Park (later known as Pesci Park) on Chestnut Street. Ray, freshly back from the war, donated \$25. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, September 13, 1945)

As he was growing up, Ray participated in many shows, plays and musicals. Having returned to town, he did another show. St. Mary's Dramatic

Club presented a three-act comedy, "The Absent Minded Bridegroom," which was held in St Mary's school auditorium on Grove St. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, March 14, 1946)

On Saturday, May 18, 1946, Ray Roncari married Madeline May Rabbett. The story was in the May 23, 1946 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal*. Ray and Madeleine raised six children: Gregory, Dale, Debbie, Robin, Leslie, and Alicia.

The marriage of Miss Madeline May Rabbett, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Howard J. Whitten of Elm street and Raymond A. Roncari, son of Mr. and Mrs. Guido Roncari of West street, took place in St. Mary's church last Saturday morning at 9.15 o'clock. The ceremony was performed by Rev. Richard R. Dunn, and he also celebrated the nuptial high mass. William B. Connor was soloist.

The bride was given in marriage by her father and she wore a white brocaded gown with long train, long full sleeves, high neckline, and her fingertip veil was fastened to a beaded tiara. Her bouquet was made up of white and pink roses in a horseshoe shape. Miss Aileen Rouleau was maid of honor, and she wore a gown of blue marquisette with lace trim, long sleeves, full skirt, a short veil to match her gown, and fastened to a blue lace calot. She carried a bouquet of pink roses in horseshoe shape. Miss Jacqueline Cousineau was bridesmaid and her gown was of pink marquisette, lace trim, full skirt, a short matching veil fastened to a lace calot. Her bouquet was horseshoe shape made up of yellow daisies. George Calverani of New Britain, a nephew of the groom, was best man.

Following the church services a breakfast was served the bridal party and close friends at the home of the bride's parents, and in the afternoon a dinner and reception was held at the Brass Rail in Southwick, Mass.

Early in the evening the bride and groom left on a wedding trip to New Hampshire and Maine, the bride wearing a green suit with black accessories. On their return they will reside on Oak street in this town.

Ray's Business Ventures

This section is not meant to be a thorough coverage of all of Ray's business ventures. It is a brief outline of some of his business ventures.

Ray joined his brothers in their firm, Roncari Construction Company which his brothers had formed during the war. His timing couldn't have been better. It was like Don LaRussa, who opened an electronics store just as television was making its debut in the United States. His timing was perfect. Ray got into the construction business just as the post-war building boom was starting. In the 1940s, most of the action in Windsor Locks had been between Main St. and West St. The land between West Street and Bradley Field was mostly farmland. The coming of big businesses, such as Hamilton Standard, to the Bradley Field area in the 1950s brought about a boom in hiring, which brought about a boom in housing in the area between West St. and Bradley

Field. The post-war increase in building brought about the need for new roads and highways. The time was right for a small construction company to grow. This sense of growth was tangible. You could feel it. You could see it. You read about it in the newspapers. Here is just one article in the *Windsor Locks Journal* which exemplifies this. It is included in its totality to give the reader a sense of this "boom mentality" of the time, and how the Roncari business fit in.

Record Building Activity During The Past Year

**Windsor Locks Takes On Appearance Of
Boom Town As Hamilton Standard Cor-
poration of East Hartford Starts Con-
struction Of New Ten Million Dollars
Plant Here. Nearly Three Hundred New
Homes Built During Year. Three Million
Dollar Terminal Building Under Con-
struction At Bradley Field.**

Feature of the year 1951 in Windsor Locks was the largest building program in the history of the town, where nearly three hundred new homes have been erected, as well as much industrial building. The 50 homes of the Roncari Builders project on Ahern avenue and Fern streets formerly the John Ahern property off North Main and Suffield streets, were sold as fast as erected and entirely occupied early in the year. The Roncari Builders and Vandais Corporation have another project now under construction off Old County Road in the southwest section of the town, where one hundred are being erected. The Jarvis Realty Company of Manchester has eighty-eight new homes under construction off Suffield street, and these will be ready for occupancy early in the spring. New homes being erected by individuals are springing up in various sections of the town, and several new streets have been opened.

The largest construction pro-
jects are at Bradley Field, where
the Hamilton Standard Propellor
Corporation of East Hartford is
completing a \$10,000,000 plant,

**Annual Meeting
Bank Stockholders
Next Tuesday**

The largest construction projects are at Bradley Field, where the Hamilton Standard Propellor Corporation of East Hartford is completing a \$10,000,000 plant, and that company expects to move in and start operations there early in the spring. At Bradley Field there is also under construction the new \$3,000,000 terminal building, and when completed in the spring will be one of the finest of its kind in this section of the country.

Despite the building of many homes in the community, the housing situation here is still serious, with many people inquiring about homes, rents and rooms. The numerous activities at Bradley Field, which will be much increased during the coming year, has stimulated the demands, and rents especially are at a premium.

To cope with increased activities and larger population, the town has increased the strength and equipment of both the police and fire departments, and both these divisions of the town government have been conducted in a creditable manner. Where new streets have been opened up in several sections of the town, new highways have been constructed, sewer and water lines have been extended, together with city gas and electric lines by the utility companies.

The settling of many new families in the community has brought forth increased enrollments in the town elementary and high schools, necessitating another addition to the public grammar school building on Church street during the past year. Further enlargement of the grammar and high school plants are now under discussion.

Business in general in Windsor Locks has been good during the past year, both in the manufacturing and mercantile lines, and there has been notable increase in the number of commercial and savings accounts in local bank, building and loan, and credit union business.

One of the biggest problems of the new year is a solution of traffic conditions in the business area of the town, especially in vicinity of the bridge crossing on Main street. The bottlenecks that occur there are the worst at any intersection in this part of the state, and are doomed to become much worse with advent of heavy traffic to and from the east side of the river with opening of the new Hamilton Standard factory at Bradley Field.

The Roncari business was construction. They specialized in the “aggregate business” — that is, the materials such as sand and crushed rocks of different sizes that went into the making of asphalt and concrete. In the beginning, they developed sections of Windsor Locks, such as the land near Ahern Ave, off of North Main Street, and land in the Southwest section of the town. They had the materials for roads, driveways and basements. In one of neighborhood off of North Street, near Bradley Field, Ray named the streets after his children. There was Robin Road, Deborah Road, Leslie Street, Dale Street, and Alicia Terrace.

At first, the Roncari company developed properties, and sold aggregate materials to builders. Then they focussed on selling aggregate materials to house and road builders. The company bought their own mining facility, the Roncari Quarry in East Granby, CT. While they built some small homes on concrete slabs in the Southwest section of Windsor Locks, their specialty was large projects, such as roads.

The three brothers, Ray, Al and Angelo worked together. Angelo was the president. He was also a whiz with machinery. He ran the quarry. Al was the construction site specialist. Ray was the businessman. He was the person who dealt with the banks, the lawyers and the government.

According to Joe Calsetta, Ray was once in a helicopter, inspecting a dam, when the helicopter lost power and autorotated down to the ground. Luckily it landed in soft mud, and Ray was able to walk away unharmed.

In about 1991, after over a half century in the business, Ray sold Roncari Industries to Galasso Materials LLC. (<http://www.eglt.org/public/quarry/Files140723/r080914.pdf>)

Ray developed the idea for, built and ran the Bradley Teletheater, an off-track betting center that opened in 1990 near Bradley International Airport. He then leased it to the state of Connecticut on a long term basis. There is a “Bobby V’s Restaurant” on the premises, which is owned by Bobby Valentine.

Ray Roncari and Simon Konover teamed to build the Sheraton hotel at Bradley Field. This was then leased to the Sheraton chain on a long term basis.

Another of Ray’s businesses was Roncari Air Cargo, at Bradley Field. See the photo below.



Later in life, Ray was president and owner of Roncari Express Valet Parking in Windsor Locks.

Ray's Civic Leadership

Ray was a leader in civic associations during his entire working life. Ray's involvement in civic organizations is well known. He was past president of both the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary, the first recipient of the Young Man of the Year Award given by the Jaycees of Windsor Locks, former Director and former Chairman of the Board of the Connecticut Construction Industries Association, and recipient of the Man of the Year Award in 1989; additionally, he was past director of Connecticut Road Builders Association, former Director of the Connecticut Business & Industry Association, Past President and Director of Connecticut Bituminous Concrete Producers Association.

Ray's Philanthropic Generosity

We saw earlier in this paper that he made a donation to help build a swimming pool in the Public Park on Center Street just after he returned home from his military service. He gave generously to his church, to the town, and to individual people in need.

Much of Ray's generosity was never made public. He helped families of people who worked for him when they needed it. Those families will never forget what he did for them.

When St. Mary's School needed new sidewalks and paving, Ray took care of it. He was generous to the Catholic churches of the town. He was generous in sports and in town projects.

In 2012, a street clock that is 14 1/2 feet tall, and has a face that is three feet in diameter, was installed on the corner of Main and Elm Streets, and dedicated to Ray Roncari for his devotion to the town of Windsor Locks. See the photo below.



Ray's Love of Sports

Ray's love of and support of sports was formally recognized by his induction into the Windsor Locks Sports Hall of Fame, which stated:

In 1990, a sportswriter named Rich Hanley made a documentary film of the 1965 Little League World Championship team. It was called "As Dreams Go By." Rich, now a professor of communications at Quinnipiac, got Brent Musberger to narrate the film. The film was so well made that it was nominated for and actually won a regional Emmy that year for the most outstanding sports documentary in New England! It is still being run on a regular basis by CPTV after 24 years. It is justifiably a source of tremendous civic pride in Windsor Locks and elsewhere. This film would not have occurred without the financial backing of Ray Roncari. He donated \$10,000 to have it made. Like so many other activities that Ray supported, this gift was made without any fanfare. He was a guy who loved his hometown, had the financial means to aid it, and quietly did so.



**Skating rink warming hut,
Center St., across from Whiton St.**

Ray also constructed the warming hut at the old local skating rink on Center Street, sponsored American Legion baseball, re-surfaced the high school tennis courts for free, sponsored the local soap box derby, and supported both a bowling league and a men's basketball league team.

Ray was a partner with daughter Leslie in Script R Farm in Windsor Locks, where he raised his “Winloc” horses, named for his hometown. One of the horses, Winloc’s Slew, was the son of Seattle Slew, who was the Triple Crown winner in 1977.

The writeup of Ray’s induction to the Windsor Locks Sports Hall of Fame states:

“Perhaps Ray’s biggest sports sponsorship for the town, however, is thoroughbred horse racing. He created the Script R Farm on Center St., an operation that continues today under the capable stewardship of his daughter, Leslie. Ray and Leslie have honored the town as well by often naming horses after Windsor Locks citizens of note. For example, they named a horse “Winloc’s John Lee,” after one of the town’s most beloved citizens. Another horse was named “Banker Bob” after Bob Taravella.”

The Religious Side of Ray

Ray was a life long member of St. Mary Church and Eucharist Minister, as well as cross bearer for funerals. Ray’s love of the Passionist Community was an integral part of his life. He was instrumental in the building of Holy Family Monastery in West Hartford where he was made an Honorary Member of the Passionist Congregation in 1990. He was Co-Founder, First President and Director of the Council for Moral Leadership with Rev. Joseph Leo Flynn, C.P., Past President or Chairman of Holy Family Retreat Leagues and Co-Chairman of the National Retreat Convention in 1956. He was a Fourth Degree Member of Riverside Council 26 CT Knights of Columbus, Master Knight in the Order of Malta, Knight of St. Gregory.

Ray’s Life: A Summary

Raymond A. Roncari was born on March 24, 1924. He died, at the age of 82, on August 3, 2006. He packed a lot into those 82 years. Windsor Locks has produced a number of truly outstanding people, but even among them, Ray Roncari is unique. He was a “Windsor Locks Original”.



Ray Roncari

Born to immigrants, he stood out from the crowd even in his youth. We saw how he saved a friend from drowning when he was only seven. While in grammar school and in high school, he continually got “perfect attendance” awards, and made the honor roll often. He was a Cub Scout and a Boy Scout. He often had roles in plays and musicals, and got awards for patriotic essays.

Right after high school, he entered the Army, where he fought bravely in Italy, was wounded, won a Purple Heart, was captured by the Germans and placed in a prison camp, and was eventually freed by the Russians. All of this time, he was writing back to his parents and to the *Windsor Locks Journal*, letting folks know what was happening.

Reading the actual *Windsor Locks Journal* articles about his military service let us see how that affected his parents. Looking at the dates that they heard back from him while he was fighting, was wounded, was captured, and was freed, let us see how months of uncertainty must have played on the minds of his parents and family.

We saw how he got back into plays and musicals when he returned home, sold war bonds, spoke at Windsor Locks High School, and got into the family construction business with his brothers. We saw how he helped grow the business and start a number of other highly successful businesses. We saw that he was a civic leader, a generous philanthropist, a deeply religious man, and a sports enthusiast. He was a man who loved his family, and his town, and his family and his town loved him in return. He was a man to be emulated.

Sources

1920 US Census, search was done on Guido Roncari of Windsor Locks.

1930 US Census, search was done on Guido Roncari of Windsor Locks

Naturalization paper for Guido Roncari, May 1, 1931, Hartford Connecticut, US Department of Labor, Naturalization Service, Form 2202 L-A. Certification No. 1 58623.

"A Clock is Dedicated to Raymond Roncari Who Loved Windsor Locks like No Other Place," *Windsor Locks Patch*, Larry Smith, Sept. 26, 2012.

"Leslie Roncari Works for the Family", Jack Redmond's "Cabbages and Kings" column in the *Windsor Locks Journal* of June 21, 1991.

Ray Roncari's 2014 Induction into the Windsor Locks Sports Hall of Fame, <http://www.windsorlocks-hof.com/raymond-roncari/>

Obituary of Raymond A. Roncari, *Hartford Courant*, August 5, 2006.

Obituary of Raymond A. Roncari, *Journal Inquirer*, Aug 4-8, 2006.

"Business Figure R. Roncari Dies," article by Joan Garrett, *Hartford Courant*, August 5, 2006

Nineteen articles from the *Windsor Locks Journal* are included in this paper. The date of each was listed next to the article.

Chapter 16

1965 Little League World Champions

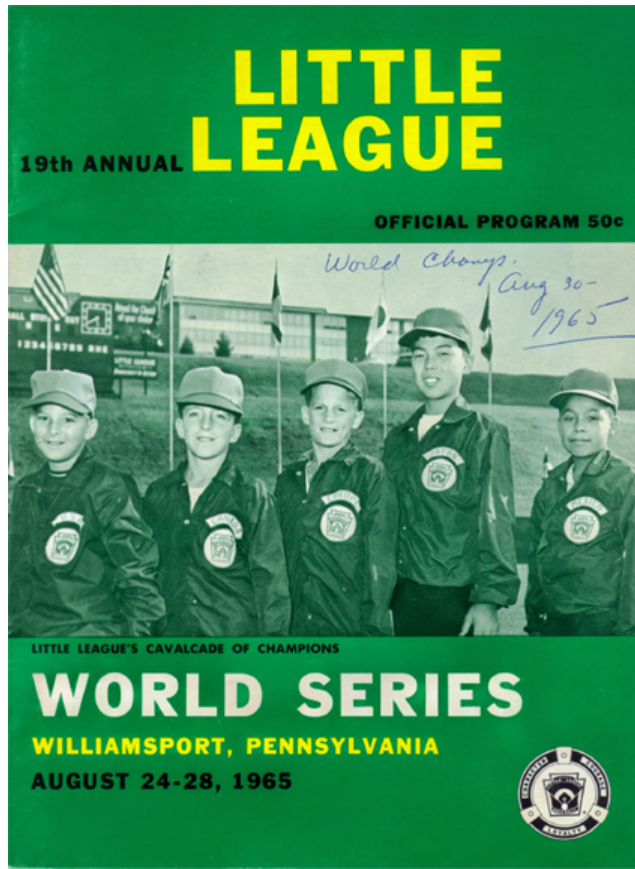
Windsor Locks has had some nationally known athletes:

- **Harry Brusie** was an extremely well-known sulky driver. When he died, 235 newspapers in 26 states had obituaries for him. His racing days were in the 1920s and 1930s.
- **Sidney Burnap, Jr.** attended Yale University (Class of 1905) where he was one of the top middle-to-long distance runners in the world. In 1904 he was ranked 7th in the world in the 400 meter run. Additionally, Burnap's 2-mile relay team once held the world record for that event.

However, no achievement by a Windsor Locks athlete or team has ever attained as much visibility, or has generated as much excitement as the Windsor Locks Little League team that won the Little League World Series in 1965.



1961 Windsor Locks Little League World Champions
Front, L-R: Bob Creech, Mike O'Connor, Phil Devlin, Howie Tersavich, Steve Scheerer, Tom Billick.
Middle: Bruce Ackerlind, Wayne Arent, Ted Holmes, Bill Boardman, Bob Rumbold. Top Row: Coach Russ Mattesen, Mike Roche, Dale Misiek, Al Barrett, Fran Aniello, Dennis Dakin, Mgr. Bob O'Connor



The Little League Baseball World Series has been held annually in Williamsport, PA since 1947. It has been won by teams from towns and cities in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Mexico, Venezuela, Curaçao, and the United States. In 1965 a team from Windsor Locks, Connecticut won the world championship!



The Little League World Series was a “single elimination” event in 1965. That meant that if you lost a single game, you were out of the series. In 1965, 6,350 worldwide all-star teams played for the right to go to Williamsport. After the first round of games, 3,175 teams remained. After the second round, they were down to 1,587 teams. If you keep dividing by two, you see that you have to win 13 games to win the World Series.

The celebration that was held in Windsor Locks after the team returned was described in the Sept.13,1965, *Springfield Union*. There was a parade that was more than a mile long, which started at the Memorial Hall, marched through the business district on Main Street, and went to the Little League baseball diamond at Pesci Park, where the ceremonies were held. Below are two photographs of the parade.



Then there was a celebration dinner with approximately 1,500 people in attendance. Both Governor John Dempsey and Secretary of the State, Ella Grasso, were there to offer their congratulations. A movie of the big game that was purchased by C. H. Dexter, and presented to the Windsor Locks Little League, was shown. Below is a photo of Governor Dempsey and Secretary of State Ella Grasso at the celebration dinner.



**Gov. Dempsey & Sec. of State Ella Grasso
at Celebration Dinner**

According to the Windsor Locks Hall of Fame website, the team had to win three games to win the World Series playoffs. In the first game, they defeated a team from Maracaibo, Venezuela, 5-3. In the second game, they defeated a very good team from Waco, Texas, 1-0. They won the final game, 3-1, over a team from Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada. That was the first and only time that a team from Canada has made it to the finals. In that game, Dale Misiek and Mike Roche were outstanding. Mike struck out 14 batters that day, and Dale hit a two-run homer. The two Windsor Locks pitchers, Mike Roche and Bill Boardman, had a combined earned run average of 0.53 for the 13 game winning streak and that the team outscored its opponents 69 to 12 that year.

Below are photos taken after the game and after the boys landed at Bradley Field.



Tom Billick, Bob Creech and Steve Sheerer return from Williamsport, PA.

In 1990, the teams held a 25th anniversary reunion game in Hamilton, Ontario. They were the only Little League finalists to hold a reunion game!

The Windsor Locks champions also got to meet four major league Hall of Famers. In Williamsport, several team members met Lefty Gomez in a local barbershop. The entire team also met Jackie Robinson, who provided analysis for ABC's "Wide World of Sports telecast." Later, the team met Willie Mays in Shea Stadium and Mickey Mantle on "Mickey Mantle Day" in Yankee Stadium.



The team held a 50th reunion and parade sponsored by the Windsor Locks Little League in 2015. Below is a photo of the 1990 reunion.



**Front L-R: Bob Creech, Mike O'Connor, Phil Devlin
Howie Tersavich, Steve Sheerer, Tom Billick,
Middle: Mike Roche, Bruce Ackerlind, Ted Holmes
Bill Boardman, Bob Rumbold. Back: Dale Misiek,
Al Barrett, Fran Aniello, Dennis Dakin.**

Sources:

The 1965 Windsor Locks Little League Team, Windsor Locks CT Hall of Fame, <http://www.windsorlocks-hof.com/inductees/the-1965-windsor-locks-littleleague-team/>

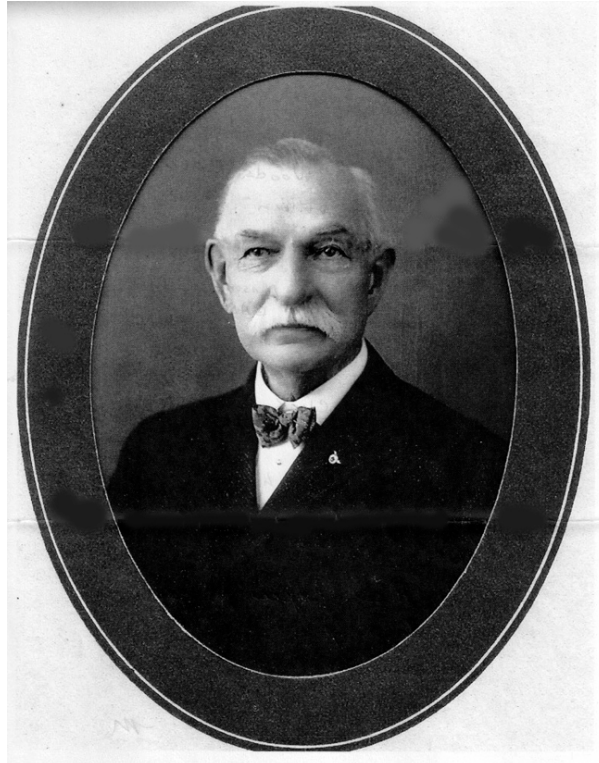
"Mile-Long Parade, Banquet Honor Little League Champions," *Springfield Union*, Sept. 13, 1965.

"Windsor Locks Wins on Triple Play," *Trenton Evening Times* of August 22, 1965.

Author's note: A draft of this article was sent to Philip Devlin for review. He was a member of the 1965 Windsor Locks Little League World Champion team. He provided additional information, and is responsible for the photographs. The two photos of the parade, and the photo of Governor Dempsey and Secretary of State Ella Grasso at the Celebration Dinner were taken by his father, Colonel Francis W. Devlin. Thanks to Phil for his advice and for the photos.

Chapter 17

Respected Town Leader Causes Bank Collapse



Alfred Woods Converse
1835 -1912

Introduction

Throughout its existence, the town of Windsor Locks has been a relatively happy place. It has had problems such as floods, fires, hurricanes, and a tornado. However, the town has one very dark chapter in its history, which took a long time to recover from. From 1879 to 1899, a man embezzled \$26,000 from a local bank. He hid his embezzlement so well that the loss wasn't detected for over twenty years. A few weeks after the embezzlement was made known, he committed suicide. His embezzlement caused the bank to be short by \$140,000. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, May 3, 1912) That amount is the equivalent of \$4.6 Million in 2019 dollars. That was a massive shortfall. The recovery was long and difficult.

The bank was the Windsor Locks Savings Bank, and the man was Mr. Alfred Woods Converse, who was better known as “A. W. Converse”. He was a well known, well liked and successful businessman and civic leader. When the embezzlement was discovered, and it was made known that he had stolen the money, most people did not believe that he did it. Soon after the embezzlement was announced, he committed suicide.

When people did come to believe that he did it, they tried to find out how much of their life savings would be returned to them. To keep the townspeople up to speed on the progress of the case, the *Windsor Locks Journal* published over 60 articles between 1912 and 1916. More than 1,600 citizens had money deposited in the bank, at a time when the population of the town was only 3,700.

This chapter presents the story of Mr. A. W. Converse, his embezzlement, and the four year process to determine the percentage of their money that the depositors would get back. The chapter is divided into two parts. **Part 1** describes the A. W. Converse that the people of Windsor Locks knew, admired and loved, and ends with the discovery of the embezzlement. **Part 2** describes the four year process of determining the extent of the loss, and how much of their loss was recovered by the depositors.

Part 1 - Mr. A. W. Converse

A. W. Converse was born in 1835. He was respected, admired and loved in Windsor Locks. He fought in, and was wounded in the Civil War. Later he was a leader of the local chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), which was a fraternal group of Union veterans of the Civil War.

Mr. Converse was the Treasurer of the Windsor Locks Savings Bank. The *Springfield Republican* article of Sept. 4, 1871 said: “The Windsor Locks Savings Bank, chartered in May 1871, which commenced receiving deposits on August 15, A. W. Converse being the treasurer, is proving a great success. Deposits increase daily, and the bank is a great convenience, and one that has long been needed.” The article shows how well respected he was.

The *Hartford Courant* of January 17, 1912, wrote an obituary for Mr. Converse which provided the following information. Mr Converse was a prominent member of the local chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic, which was named after his brother, Major Joseph H. Converse, who was killed at Cold Harbor battle of the Civil War. A. W. Converse spent his early years on his father’s farm in Stafford, CT, and in his father’s foundry, where he learned the founder’s trade. He attended Wilbraham Academy and Monson Academy for two years, after which he worked for his father’s foundry until the outbreak of the Civil War, when on September 5, 1862, he enlisted in the Connecticut Volunteers and served until August 26, 1863. He was promoted from Sergeant to Second

Lieutenant to First Lieutenant. He served mostly in Louisiana. He was wounded in the battle of Irish Bend. He was in every engagement in which his regiment fought. After he was discharged, he worked for his father in the foundry. He took over the business when his father died, and then sold the foundry to Eli Horton. In 1867, he was elected town clerk and treasurer, and he continued in those jobs for 15 years. In 1868, he was appointed as Postmaster by order of President Johnson, and continued in that job until his death. He was a member of the House of Representatives from Windsor Locks in 1897. He wrote a book called: "Windsor Locks, in the War of The Rebellion". He was elected treasurer of the Windsor Locks Savings Bank in early 1871, and continued in that office for forty years, watching the bank grow to more than \$400,00 in deposits. He was a Mason and a Shriner. He had been the Commander of the local post of the Grand Army of the Republic. He married Julia Orutt in 1857. They had four children, two of which died early in life. The two who live were Ida G. Converse who lived with her father, and Myrtle R. Elson of Woburn Mass. His sister married Dr. Sidney Burnap, the owner of the Burnap block and a noted physician. (*Hartford Courant* of January 17, 1912)

The following is a quote from that article, which describes how the people of Windsor Locks felt about Mr. Converse.

"Mr. Converse had a never failing kindliness, and a fine and pleasant word for everyone. He was very generous and ready to lend a helping hand to all good objects. He was a brave man, brave in battle, in all the things that go to make up a busy and strenuous life, and brave in dying. His advice to young men was "neither drink, chew or smoke; learn a trade and make yourself master of it in every detail and worthy of promotion".

A few days after the *Hartford Courant* published that article, it was discovered that Mr. Converse had embezzled a large amount of money from the Windsor Locks Savings Bank.

Mr. Converse built and was the owner of the Converse Block, which housed the Post Office and the Public Library. It was the building on the North corner of Spring Street and Main Street. It was often referred to as "the Converse Block" or "the Masonic Block". His father previously had a Block there. His new block was beautifully designed and well built.

The term "Block" was used around the turn of the century to mean a large multi-purpose commercial building. There were 15 "Blocks" in Windsor Locks. They were owned by prominent people such as A. W. Converse.

Mr. Converse built his Block in 1902. When constructed, it housed the Post Office, of which he was the Postmaster, the Windsor Locks Public Library, and the Masonic temple.

See below for a photo of the Converse Block.



Converse Block was also called "Masonic Block"
It housed the Post Office and the Library.
Corner of Spring St. and Main St.
Lighter building on right was the Bidwell Block.

Below is a portrait of Mr. Converse in his Civil War uniform.



A. W. Converse
in Civil War uniform

While his embezzlement went on for two decades, there is little to say about it. No-one knew about it. Nothing was written about it. It just started in 1879 and went on for twenty years. The auditors did their jobs in accordance with banking regulations, and the bank directors did their jobs, but they all failed to find out what he was doing. The bank appeared to be in great shape. He “cooked the books” very well, and wasn’t caught for more than two decades. Everyone loved and respected him. It turns out that they didn’t know him very well.

Part 2 - Resolving the Embezzlement Crisis

The second part of this chapter is about what happened after Mr. Converse’s embezzlement was discovered in December of 1911. The people of Windsor Locks had no reason to mistrust Mr. Converse. He was known to be a model citizen, a successful businessman, a long-time Postmaster, and the town clerk. Between the day when the embezzlement was made known to the public, and the day when all of the bank’s assets had been distributed, the *Windsor Locks Journal* had published over 60 articles on that process, which lasted four and a half years (January 1912 - July 1916).

Most of the 60 articles in the *Windsor Locks Journal* were long, complex, and difficult to read. They often filled one, two or three entire columns of the newspaper. They described the details of the judicial issues, and the details of the auditing process. The rest of this chapter will give a summary of the main things that happened in that process. This will be done by briefly summarizing the important points in *Windsor Locks Journal* articles. The goal here is to describe the process in a readable and interesting manner. Anyone who is interested in the fine legal and auditing details can go back and read the original articles. The date of each article is listed. The articles can easily be found in the *Windsor Locks Journal* archives, which are found at <http://windsorlocks.advantage-preservation.com/>

The first few summaries of articles below will be a bit longer because they set the stage for the process. As you read this chronological sequence of events, try to put yourself in the place of Windsor Locks citizens who had their savings deposited in the Windsor Locks Savings Bank.

The depositors, as well as the bank directors, were “on edge” during this long process. Just as no-one in Windsor Locks would have guessed that one of their “favorite sons” would embezzle a large sum of money over a 20 year period, none of them would have guessed how long it would take to figure out what to do about it, and then to make that happen.

To help set the stage, here is a list of the groups which were involved in the four year process. As you shall see below, the main groups were:

- The **Judges** in charge of the case.
- The **Depositors**.
- The **Bank Directors**. These were important business leaders of Windsor Locks who served as the bank's Board of Directors. They were responsible for the bank.
- The **Bank Commissioners**. They were appointed by the court to analyze the situation when the embezzlement was found. They report to the Judge.
- The **Receivers**. They are the persons who the judge put in charge of paying off the bank's creditors as well as possible.
- The **Windsor Locks Business Men's Association**. They were a group of leading Windsor Locks businessmen who wanted to make sure the best business decisions were made for the bank.

The first two articles summarized below are from the *Hartford Courant*. The rest of the articles are from the *Windsor Locks Journal*. The reason for using the two *Hartford Courant* articles here is that it is a daily newspaper, while the *Windsor Locks Journal* is a weekly. As a result, the *Hartford Courant* published the news of the death of Mr. Converse, and of the finding that he embezzled money from the bank, before the *Journal* did.

JANUARY 15, 1912 issue of the *Hartford Courant*

The first newspaper article on the death of Mr. Converse was in the *Hartford Courant* issue of January 15, 1912. At this time, it was not yet known that he had embezzled any money.

The Jan. 15, 1912 *Hartford Courant* had a headline: "Veteran Postmaster Shot in Abdomen — Alfred W. Converse of Windsor Locks was cleaning an old revolver." The article said:

"(Windsor Locks, Jan. 14) Alfred W. Converse, Windsor Locks' veteran postmaster, met with a serious accident this afternoon while engaged in cleaning an old pistol. He accidentally discharged the weapon and the bullet entered his abdomen. He was able to call for assistance from members of his family and Doctors Robinson and Alcorn were hastily summoned. Everything possible was done for his comfort but on account of his age, the doctors did not deem it advisable to probe for the bullet. He is in serious condition. The bullet, which was of .32 calibre, passed through his spleen and is lodged in the muscles of his back."

JANUARY 29, 1912 issue of the *Hartford Courant*

The *Hartford Courant* of January 29, 1912 announced that the Windsor Locks Savings Bank had been found to be short a large sum of money, and that Mr. Converse's death was now thought to be intentional. It said that it would be two months before the exact amount of the shortage could be known with confidence. Two State Bank Commissioners have been assigned to the case, and a Court in Hartford stopped the bank from doing any business or paying any dividends for three months. The bank was closed for business. The bank had more than 1,600 accounts.

The Feb. 2, 1912 *Hartford Courant* described the shock that went through the Windsor Locks community at what has happened. The accounts had been correctly kept from 1871, when the bank was founded, until 1879, when Mr. Converse began to embezzle money. He had taken money out irregularly from 1879 until 1910, when he resigned from the Bank.

Mr. and Mrs. Converse had separated in 1882, and Mrs. Converse was living with one of her daughters. Mr. Converse had converted large sums of money into stocks of Hartford insurance companies, and had them made out to a woman who was not his wife. He had also given at least \$60,000 to his daughters. He had been distributing all of his money prior to his death, and had been trying to keep his wife from getting any of the money. (*Hartford Courant* of Feb 12, 1912). Mr. Converse had been selling his businesses and his properties. About \$48,000 of such sales were listed. The article said that Mr. Converse had been winding up his affairs about three years. There was little left to give away in his will.

The bank now had to figure out how to distribute what was left of its funds in the best way. It was clear from the start that what was best for the bank's depositors, was not what was recommended by the bank's directors, who really wanted to keep the bank in business. Quickly there was another group who was involved. The Court appointed Connecticut bank commissioners to figure out what to do and to make recommendations to the court.

Mr. Holt, the Bank Commissioner had already started an investigation into Mr. Converse's finances. Mr. Converse had not lost money in the stock market as some had feared. The land on which he built his Block had been given to him by his father, and the construction of the Block cost around \$20,000 which is less than the amount that he embezzled.

At that time, Mr. Holt estimated that the Windsor Locks Savings Bank had lost about \$180,000 but he is going to fully investigate to come up with the exact number. That amount is the equivalent of \$4.6 Million in 2019 dollars.

FEBRUARY 9, 1912 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal*

- There is no doubt that Mr. Converse was the reason for the missing funds.
- The amount of his embezzlement was estimated to be about \$36,000.

- Together with the loss of 20 years of interest, the bank's loss was about \$100,000.
- A total shortage of about \$160,000 was expected.
- The officers and directors of the bank were ordered to appear at Superior Court in Hartford to show cause as to why the bank's charter should not be revoked, and why a receiver should not be appointed to take over the bank.
- A meeting of depositors met in the Burnap Opera House. Rev. Plunkett did his best to keep the meeting under control. Charles Colli addressed the meeting in Italian to help the immigrants understand what was happening.

DEFINITION: A **Receiver** is a person named by the court to see that an insolvent company or bank's debts are paid as well and fairly as possible.

FEBRUARY 16, 1912

- Mr. Converse's two daughters indicated that they would make some restitution, but they need to seek legal advice.
- The Judge delayed a decision as to whether to name a receiver, or let the Bank Directors handle things.
- The Depositors asked that the Bank Directors make restitution for the money that was embezzled since they were responsible for the bank's operations. Of course, the bank directors were also depositors and they felt that they didn't do anything wrong.
- The Banks Directors did not want the judge to shut down the bank (take away its charter). They wanted to get the bank back in business again.

MARCH 22, 1912

- The expert accountant who was reviewing the bank's books said that it now looked like the bank's deficit was \$141,000, but he has more work to do before it come up with the final numbers.
- The Bank deficit was estimated to be 24%
- These numbers do not take into account possible restitution by the Converse family, or any donations that come from businessmen or the Bank Directors.
- A suggestion was made that the depositors take a 25% cut in what they were owed, so that the bank could be made solvent again, and continue doing business. (The depositors did not like that.)
- The Windsor Locks Business Mens Association decided to try to get business leaders to make donations
- The depositors had a large meeting in the Burnap Opera House, and made recommendations. A summary of the discussion was given in Italian to help the Italian immigrants understand what was happening.
- Bank directors thought that if money is recovered from the family, and the businessmen raise some money, the bank loss could be as low as 15%

APRIL 5, 1912

- There were lots of hard feelings in town.
- Bank deficit is \$147,000. (*Author's note: this number has been changing.*)

APRIL 12, 1912

- The Bank Directors do not want the Judge to close down the bank. They want the depositors to take a 25% cut in what they were owed. They want the bank to be re-opened for business.
- The Depositors want to get all of their money back.
- The total deficit is \$147,000.
- Hard feelings remain.
- The Converse daughters now have a lawyer.

APRIL 26, 1912

- Efforts by the Business Mens Association to raise money for the bank failed.

MAY 3, 1912

- A third hearing was held as to whether the Judge should appoint a receiver. There is still no decision.
- The Bank was allowed to open and pay depositors up to 50% of what they were owed.
- The Judge was told that Mr. Converse embezzled from \$100 to \$1000 a month from the bank from 1879 to 1899.
- The Directors told the judge that a 26% scaling of the deposits would make the bank solvent.

MAY 10, 1912

- The scaling of deposits by 25% was agreed to by the court.
- The petition by the Depositors for the judge to name a receiver was denied.

MAY 17, 1912

- Judge Curtis decided to liquidate the bank.
- Previous court decision to not appoint a receiver was overturned. A receiver is appointed.

MAY 24, 1912

- The Windsor Locks Savings Bank is no longer in existence.
- All that remains is for the Receiver to wind up its affairs.
- The Judge directs creditors and depositors to file their claims before Oct. 1, 1912
- The Bank officers and directors were ordered to turn all bank property to the receiver.

- The judge said that he decided to close the bank and have a receiver because he feared that the depositors might be defrauded. He cited the Bank Directors' recommendation for the "scaling of deposits" to form a surplus for the bank as his reason.

JUNE 28, 1912

- The idea of the Directors raising \$25,000 to reduce the banks losses is dead.

JUNE 12, 1912

- The Receiver has mailed checks to depositors for 50% of their deposits.

JULY 19, 1912

- The safe, furniture and fixtures of the bank have been sold to F. S. Bidwell & Co., and the rest of the visible holdings of the bank will soon disappear.

SEPTEMBER 23, 1912

- The receiver said that about 100 accounts exist, which are worth several thousands of dollars, which have not sent in their passbooks. They must do so by Oct. 1 in order for the receiver to send them 50% of their deposit.

NOVEMBER 22, 1912

- The receiver brought suit against the bank directors to get them to pay for the losses caused by the embezzlement. The directors are: J. R. Montgomery, J. W. Johnson, James T. Coogan, E. B. Bailey, George Golver, G. M. Montgomery, Frank L. Ashley, M. P. Robinson and C. F. Cleveland.
- The receiver has attached property of the bank directors.

DECEMBER 20, 1912

- F. S. Bidwell made a claim for \$1500 to the receivers for space that the bank had rented but not used.
- The receiver paid F. S. Bidwell \$75.

FEBRUARY 28, 1913

- A year has passed since this process started.
- Mr. Converse had given away all of his property before committing suicide.
- The receivers will go after the property that Mr. Converse gave his daughters and Miss Jordan, who has since died. Miss Jordan was the woman to whom he had had transferred assets to before he died.

MARCH 21, 1913

- The court allowed \$500 for each of the people acting as receivers and for each of the lawyers.

- When the receivers were appointed, the court approved a scaling of 26% of the deposits. The depositors have received 55 1/2% of their deposits.
- It is hoped that more money will be recovered and given to the depositors, and suits against the bank directors.

APRIL 4, 1913

- A suit had been filed in the Supreme Court of CT for \$92,000 from the Converse estate. Unfortunately, he had given away everything but \$1000.
- The lawyers are going to sue the Converse daughters.

APRIL 25, 1913

- Mr. Converse's daughters, who had gotten \$32,000 from their father, were asked by the court to return all of that money. They countered that part of the money came from land that Mr. Converse from his father, and they shouldn't have to return that. They settled with the court for the sum of \$16,500.

MAY 23, 1913

- Another sum will be paid to the depositors to take them up to 74% of their deposits.

OCTOBER 24, 1913

- The suit against Miss Jordan was settled. Stocks worth \$7,700 were turned over to the Receivers.
- The Receivers are waiting to see if the Bank Directors will offer a settlement.

NOVEMBER 11, 1913

- The Depositors have received 74% of their deposits. The suits from the Converse heirs and the Jordan estate will increase that.

APRIL 24, 1914

- The process for settling the affairs of the Bank have been going on for 2 years.

MAY 1, 1914

- The Bank Directors have never been paid anything for their services as Bank Directors, but now they are being sued because the embezzlement occurred while they were Bank Directors, even though the Judge said that they had done nothing wrong.

MAY 8 1914

- In the Court, it was shown that the Windsor Locks Savings Bank directors did not do anything different from directors of other Connecticut banks. The

judge found out that it was not the duty of the directors to tell the auditors how to do the audits.

MAY 22, 1914

- The court found the directors blameless in their duties. (*Author's note: this is an indication that the bank regulations for auditing needed improvement. Later they were improved.*)

JULY 10, 1914

- The amount on the receivers books would add another 3% to the depositors.
- The case against the Bank Directors is being appealed, but a decision is not expected until the latter part of the winter.

APRIL 2, 1915

- It has now been over three years that this process of cleaning up the problems caused by the embezzlement.
- The Supreme Court of the state of Connecticut decided to overturn the finding of the lower court, which was to not hold the Directors liable for the loss at the bank. Three judges were for the decision, Two were against it.
- This means that the Directors are liable, and there were four suits filed against them for a total of \$290,000

APRIL 9, 1915

- The Supreme Court said that the ruling against the directors was limited to six years, dating back from the time of the proceedings against them. The lawyers for the bank directors are going to try to overturn the verdict against their clients.

OCTOBER 8, 1915

- The Bank Directors settled the suits against them for \$35,000. They could have tried to get the verdict overturned, but they wanted to bring this whole case to a finish.

OCTOBER 10, 1915

- A final dividend of 15% was ordered by the court. The dividends will be mailed out on December 1. They had to write 1,600 checks and mail them.
- This means that the depositors will get about 82% of their deposits back.

DECEMBER 10, 1915

- The final checks have been sent and received.
- The depositors got back 81 1/2% of their deposits.

- It was estimated that because receivers were ordered by the court, the depositors received a total of \$40,000 more than they otherwise would have.
- The cost of using the receivers was \$1400.

JUNE 6, 1916

- The final dividends have been paid. There are no funds remaining in the bank.
- The receiver asked to be discharged from his duties.

Conclusion

The story of A. W. Converse can be summarized as follows:

- He rose to become a prominent and respected leader in Windsor Locks.
- He either changed, or a hidden dark side of him came out.
- He started embezzling from the bank, and kept it up for 20 years.
- He sold off most of his buildings and companies, and gave his money to and his daughters and to a Miss Jordan.
- When his embezzling was found out, he committed suicide
- A half of the population of Windsor Locks were depositors in the Bank, and they were worried about not getting their money back
- It took the Courts over four years to figure out how to maximize the money that would be returned to the depositors.
- The depositors got back 82% of their savings,
- The Court shut down the Windsor Locks Savings Bank.
- Later, the banking regulations across the country were made more strict.

Sources:

All information in this chapter came from articles in the *Windsor Locks Journal* and the *Hartford Courant*. The specific issue date of each newspaper was given next to the information that it provided.

Chapter 18

Enfield Mall and Enfield Square

The era of suburban shopping malls began in the United States in the 1950s. Suburban malls blossomed in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Amazon, the behemoth on-line shopping business, began in the 1990s, and it wasn't long before on-line shopping caused a downturn in the fortunes of suburban shopping malls. Dexter Plaza, in Windsor Locks, was one of the first shopping malls in the Northeast. It opened in the late 1950s. The first mall in nearby Enfield was the "Enfield Mall". A second mall, "Enfield Square," opened in 1971.

The Enfield Mall and the later Enfield Square mall were very important to the surrounding area. They were the "places to see and be seen". Enfield town planners purposely left the word "Mall" out of the name "Enfield Square," to distinguish it from the Enfield Mall.

The first of the two malls was Enfield Mall. It was located on Hazard Avenue. It consisted mostly of "Mom and Pop" shops. It had an independent book seller (Enfield Book Store), a printed T-shirt shop (Crazy Joyce's), and Enfield's only arcade (Jonathan's). It was also home to the Carvel's ice cream store, and to a very popular bar, the I-90, which featured live music. The mall was anchored by two large stores: Woolco and Sage-Allen. Woolco had a café called The Red Grille. Enfield Mall also housed "Eddie's Sporting Goods". Eddie's was a large sporting goods store which catered to all the high schools in the area, including Windsor Locks High School. It sold equipment, custom uniforms, school jackets, etc. Below is a photo of the interior of Enfield Mall.



Enfield Mall

Slowly, Enfield Mall started to fade. Woolco closed. Sage-Allen was replaced by Namco, which was replaced by Bob's Surplus Store. By the 1980s, Enfield Mall survived as a Flea Market on Sundays. It became the type of place where one could buy old books and records. The mall was redesigned as more of a "strip mall". Bob's Stores stayed but all other stores left. The mall survived and actually thrived as a strip mall.

Below is the menu from "The Red Grille" at Enfield Mall.

Today's Menu Suggestions

Soup w/Crackers Cup.....25c Bowl.....35c

1. ROAST BEEF DINNER.....\$1.10

Tender Roast Beef, Brown Gravy
Creamy Whipped Potatoes
Garden Vegetable

2. ROAST TURKEY DINNER.....95c

Roast Turkey (All White Meat)
Hot Turkey Gravy, Savory Dressing
Creamy Whipped Potatoes
Garden Vegetable, Cranberry Sauce

3. BAKED MEAT LOAF DINNER.....95c

Oven Baked Meat Loaf, Brown Gravy
Creamy Whipped Potatoes
Garden Vegetable

4. FRIED FISH PLATTER.....95c

Fried Filet of Fish, Tartar Sauce
French Fried Potatoes, Cole Slaw

* * ROLL AND BUTTER SERVED W/ABOVE DINNERS * *

99c

TODAY'S LUNCHEON SPECIAL

99c

Baked Macaroni w/Old English Cheese
Vegetable, Cole Slaw, Roll and Butter
Gelatin w/Whipped Topping **or**
Ice Cream w/Chocolate Sauce

99c

Choice of Beverage

99c

6. HOT BEEF SANDWICH.....\$1.00

Tender Slices Roast Beef — Rich Brown Gravy
Creamy Whipped Potatoes

7. SHOPPER'S DELIGHT.....\$1.00

Cup of Soup
Barbecue Beef on Toasted Bun
Served w/Crisp Potato Chips
Choice of Beverage

Menu from "The Red Grille" Woolco, Enfield Mall

The second mall, called "Enfield Square," was built in 1971. It was bigger than Enfield Mall. It replaced Enfield Mall as the place to shop and to meet friends, especially on Friday and Saturday evenings. It had two large stores, G.Fox and Steigers, both of which had small restaurants. Other stores included:

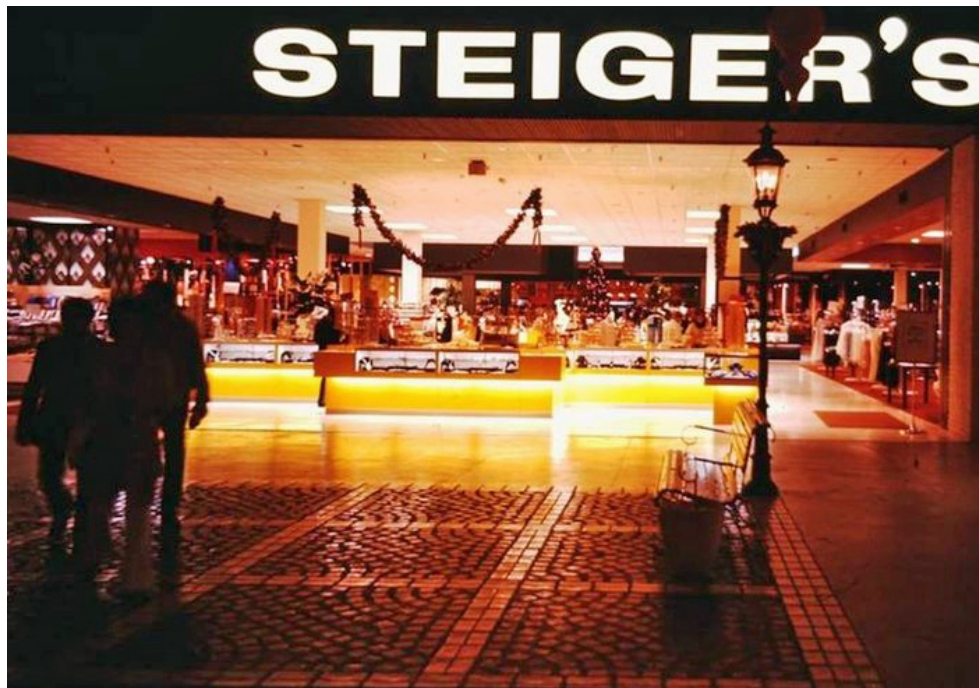
JC Pennys, Walden Books, the Pet Shop, Figaro's, Hickory Farms, the Wagon Wheel package store, Hickory Farms, Friendly's and L'Expo, which had giant slices of pizza. The JC Penny's store had a great candy counter. There was a Child's World, and a Helen Gallagher's, which had lava lamps and black-light posters. Other stores were: Chess King, Thom McCann Shoes, Kinney Shoes, the Tie Shop, Lerner's, Casual Corner, the Growth Company which sold plants, and a greeting card store. These stores were mostly national chains. That was much different from the Mom and Pop shops of Enfield Mall.

Enfield Square had a very trendy clothing store, called the "Airport". Its entry was pure 1970s kitsch. It consisted of a large cutout of an airplane, and had flashing airport lights. There was pulsating disco music in the background, and the floors were "squishy," which made it resemble an air-cargo holding-bay floor. There were no standard clothing racks. The clothing hung from shiny metal cables which came down from the ceiling.

Below are photos of the interior of Enfield Square and of the entry to Steiger's. Both photos were taken shortly after the opening of Enfield Square.



Interior of Enfield Square Mall. ~1971



Steiger's at Enfield Square ~1971

Below are two more photos of the interior of Enfield Square, which were taken in different time periods.



**Enfield Square,- mid 1970s.
Can see Lerner's, G.Fox, and Joyce Leslie.
Notice the Fountains, Street Lights and Planters**



Enfield Square - Later in its life

Enfield Square went through many changes over the years. Here is a timeline of the changes to Enfield Square Mall:

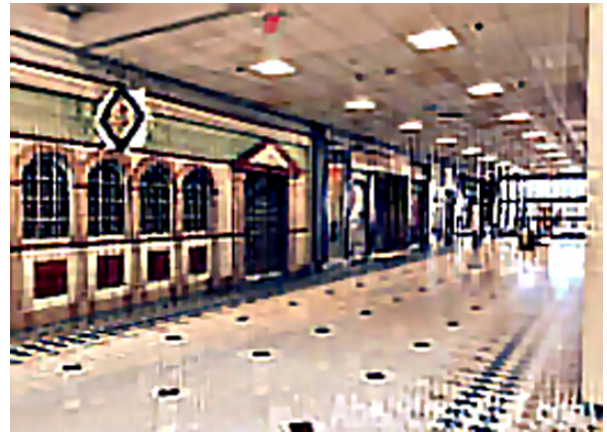
- In 1993, G.Fox was converted to a Filene's store as a result of a merger.
- In 1994, Steiger's ceased operations at the East side of the mall when the chain went out of business.
- On April 26, 1997, Sears opened in the space formerly occupied by Steiger's.
- In August 2000, JCPenney closed. The space remained vacant until Filene's expanded operations by moving its men's and home departments there in February 2001.
- Target built a new anchor on the North side of the mall in October 2001.
- In 2006, both of the Filene's stores were rebranded as Macy's after yet another merger.
- In January 2016, Macy's announced they were closing both of the locations at the mall.
- In February 2016, JP Morgan Chase foreclosed on the mall
- On August 7, 2016, Ruby Tuesday closed.
- On December 28, 2016, Sears announced that it would close its Enfield Square location in April 2017, which left Target as the only anchor left.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enfield_Square)

Enfield Square Mall had been remodeled in the late 1980 in an effort to compete with the newer and larger Ingleside Mall in Holyoke. The beautiful cobblestone floors, fountains and street lamps were replaced. The center of the Mall, which used to have a "castle" that was used by Santa and the Easter Bunny was eliminated. Stores tried to revamp. Somehow the Mall went

downhill. By the end of 2005, many stores were gone, and the Mall was a shadow of its former self.

Below are seven photos of Enfield Square, which were taken after its demise.





If you lived in Windsor Locks anytime from the opening of Enfield Mall to the demise of the Enfield Square mall, you probably visited those malls many times, and you probably stopped at Grand's Candy Castle on the way home.

Rob Baillargeon lived near both Enfield Mall and Enfield Square. He frequented both malls from the time that they were built. He provided a great deal of the information for this article.

Conclusion

Suburban shopping malls were a modern innovation in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. They were large, multi-store operations with large parking lots. That was different from the older shopping areas in towns and cities. Malls were built in the suburbs. They were nothing like the downtown shopping areas of cities such as Hartford and Springfield. They changed the way we shopped, and they provided places for teenagers to “hang out”.

The original Enfield Mall and the later Enfield Square mall were very important to Enfield and to surrounding towns, such as Windsor Locks. However, all things change with time. As of this writing in 2018, suburban malls are under a great deal of pressure. Many have already gone out of business. The latest trend in shopping is “on-line”. The giant of this trend is Amazon, but many companies with “brick and mortar” stores, have added on-line stores, which are very convenient. You can shop on-line using your computer or your “smart phone,” and have your purchases delivered to your home. There were no computers or cell phones back when the suburban malls started in the 1950s. Those malls were a product of their times, and the times changed. The Enfield Mall was a mostly made up of locally owned, locally operated “Mom and

Pop” shops, but times changed, and when Enfield Square was built, it was mostly national chains.

Windsor Locks had Dexter Plaza, and Enfield had Enfield Mall and then Enfield Square mall. Folks from Windsor Locks shopped all three of those malls. The malls changed our lives, and gave us a great deal of pleasure. Then they were changed by new technologies and changing styles. There was a popular song by Chad and Jeremy, which said: “All good things must end someday. Autumn leaves must fall.” Those words say it all. We shall see how the remaining malls evolve in the future.

EPILOG

The *Enfield Patch* (November 16, 2018) published a notice that Enfield Square would be put up for auction.

ENFIELD, CT — The beleaguered Enfield Square shopping mall, once a hotbed of activity in Enfield which has fallen victim to the changing shopping practices in today's world, will soon be offered up at auction.

LoopNet, an online real estate marketplace, has listed the 677,223 square foot commercial property as going to auction at midnight on Dec. 10, 2018. The online auction, scheduled to run through Dec. 12, will take place at Ten-X.com.

Starting bid is listed as \$3.8 million.

The property, anchored by a landlord-owned Target, is situated on just under 65 acres....

The shopping mall, constructed in 1971, has been decimated in recent years, as retailing trends favor open air lifestyle centers, "Big Box" stores and online shopping over indoor malls.

https://patch.com/connecticut/enfield/enfield-square-going-auction-block?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_term=business&utm_campaign=autopost&utm_content=enfield

Sources: Rob Baillergeon provided much information for this chapter.

Enfield Square, Wikipedia,
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enfield_Square)

Enfield Square going on the auction block., The Patch, Nov. 16, 2018.
https://patch.com/connecticut/enfield/enfield-square-going-auction-block?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_term=business&utm_campaign=autopost&utm_content=enfield

Chapter 19

Crand's Candy Castle

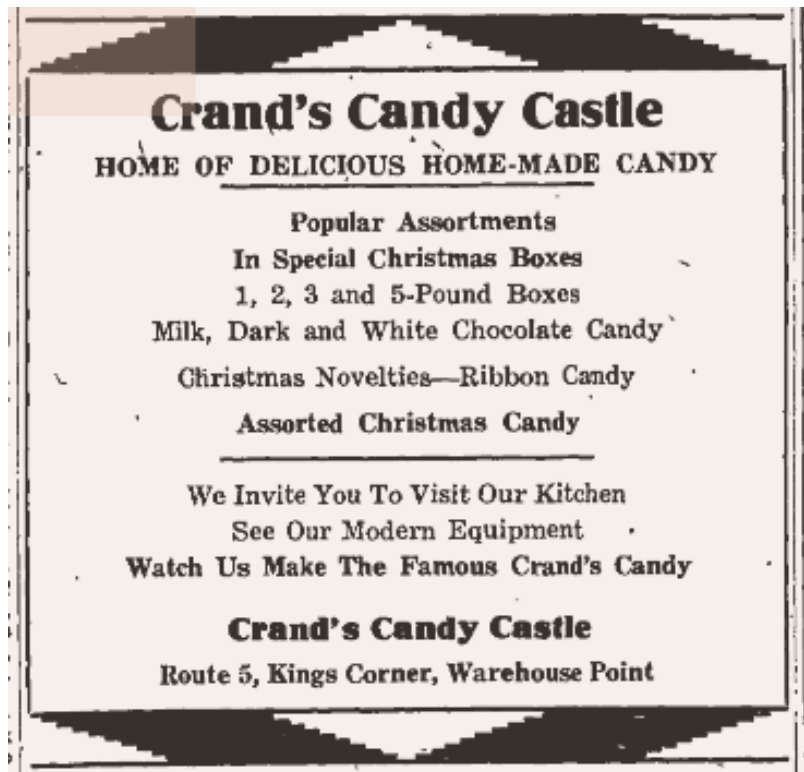
Folks who live in Windsor Locks don't spend all of the time in town. There are many nearby attractions that are part of Windsor Locks life. They include: Riverside Park, Enfield Mall, Babb's Beach, Railroad Salvage, East Windsor Drive In, the department stores in Hartford and Springfield, Lake Compounce, and *Crand's Candy Castle* in Enfield! Crand's was special. It was a small, local "Mom and Pop" shop that proved to have a great attraction for both adults and children. It was in an unassuming, whitewashed brick building with red shutters, situated at 1684 King Street in Enfield, near the East Windsor border.



The business was founded by Greek immigrant, John Crand, in Gardner, MA. He moved his business to Enfield in 1953. His family lived on the second floor, and they sold candy on the first floor. John Crand passed away in 1963, leaving his sons, Robert and Tom in charge. Tom retired in 1990, leaving Robert

as the sole proprietor until the business closed in 2001. (Throwback Thursday, Enfield Patch, by Tim Jensen, May 3, 2018)

The earliest ad found in local newspapers is the following one from the December 8, 1958 edition of the *Windsor Locks Journal*.



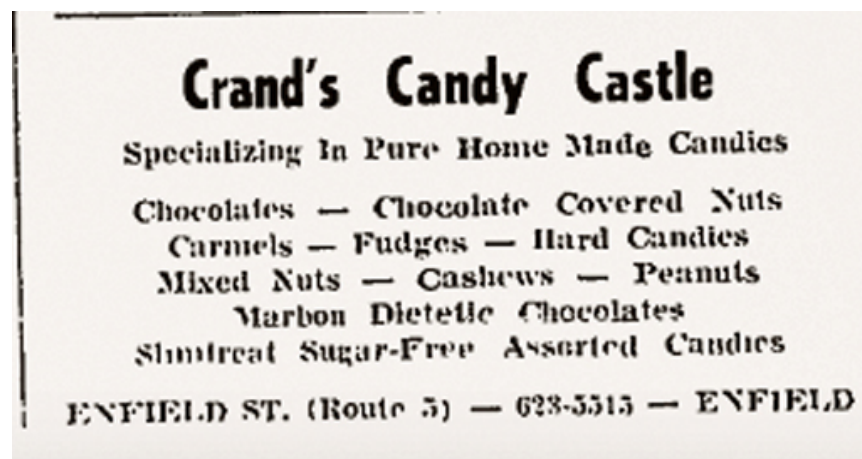
Crand's Candy Castle
HOME OF DELICIOUS HOME-MADE CANDY

Popular Assortments
In Special Christmas Boxes
1, 2, 3 and 5-Pound Boxes
Milk, Dark and White Chocolate Candy
Christmas Novelties—Ribbon Candy
Assorted Christmas Candy

We Invite You To Visit Our Kitchen
See Our Modern Equipment
Watch Us Make The Famous Crand's Candy

Crand's Candy Castle
Route 5, Kings Corner, Warehouse Point

The latest ad by Crand's in the *Windsor Locks Journal* was in the August 31, 1972 edition. Note the addition of "sugar free candies".



Crand's Candy Castle
Specializing In Pure Home Made Candies

Chocolates — Chocolate Covered Nuts
Carmels — Fudges — Hard Candies
Mixed Nuts — Cashews — Peanuts
Marbon Dietetic Chocolates
Shmireat Sugar-Free Assorted Candies

ENFIELD ST. (Route 5) — 623-5515 — ENFIELD

The *Springfield Union* did an article on local candy stores in their December 19, 1982 edition, which featured a writeup on Crand's. Tom Crand said that the last two years were their most profitable, and that Crand's was open seven days a week. At the time, they had gone heavily into moulding novelties out of solid chocolate. The Christmas season is the big one for Crand's, which does a great deal of business by mail order. Two and five pound boxes of chocolates were popular. Last year, a single customer bought 400 pounds of chocolate to use as gifts. Their three most popular fillings were: nougat, butter crunch and caramel. Crand's did not use any synthetic fillings. For example, their strawberry cream-filled chocolate is made with a strawberry puree rather than an imitation flavoring.

Following are photos of the inside of . Those who frequented the Crand's will never forget the aroma of the place or the taste of their wares. Here are photos of the sign outside the building and of the front entrance.



Crand's Outdoor Sign



Entrance to Crand's Candy Castle

Following are photos of Crand's candy displays, and of candy being made in their kitchen.



Crand's candy display room



Crand's candy display room



Crاند's candy being made



Crاند's candy kitchen

The *Hartford Courant* had a story on June 11, 2001 which foreshadowed the end of *Crand's Candy Castle*. In it, Robert Crand gave a little history about the store, and the reasons why he was about to close the business. His father, John, learned how to make fudge and candy while working at ice cream and sandwich shops around the Northeast. In 1935, he started his own business, the Priscilla Candy Shop, in Gardner, MA, and moved it to Enfield in 1953. The store has its busiest seasons around Thanksgiving, Mother's Day, Christmas, Easter and Valentine's Day. In mid-December, the shop was open 10 hours a day, and extra workers are hired for evening work in packaging and shipping special orders.

By this time, Robert was the proprietor of the shop, and he was getting tired of the heavy workload. He said: "This wasn't bad when my brother was here working with me, but now I'm down here all the time. I'm 66. I want to travel. I want to get out and do something else. My nephews don't want to get into this — they see the time it takes."

In 2001, a long-established and well-loved business came to an end. We all miss *Crand's Candy Castle*.

Crand's Candy Castle gives rise to the Six Spoons Chocolatier

The recipes and the methods of Crand's have been reborn in New Hartford, CT. Emily King, who used to work at Crand's, and who learned the methods and recipes that were developed by the Crand family, has opened her shop, which is called the *Six Spoons Chocolatier*. She was given permission to use those recipes and techniques. She said: "Yes, I do make almost everything just the way Bob Crand taught me. I make my chocolate blend as he did. I still use the small distributors that are still in the business, as he did. I am unable to make the creams exactly the way he did at Crands. He made the creams over an open gas flame in massive copper kettles. I have had to tweak my recipes to utilize my electric kettles."

Emily's business website is:

<https://www.facebook.com/sixspoonschocolate/>

The address of the Six Spoons Chocolatier is:

141 Main St., New Hartford, CT 06057

The phone number is (860) 238-7505

An article by Katherine Boughton reviews the *Six Spoons Chocolatier*. She says:

An Enfield candy-making legend has been reborn in New Hartford. Emily King, a former "Crand's kid," has carried forward the half-century-long *Crand's Candy Castle* tradition in her new shop, the *Six Spoons Chocolatier*, located in Marandino's shopping plaza on Route 44.

Since March, she has sold handcrafted chocolates,

fudge, confections, artisan ice cream and traditional drinking chocolate that have already drawn accolades.

“Six Spoons is quite possibly more magical than the *Crand's Candy Castle* of my childhood,” wrote Bryan Kelly, who recently drove his family from Hartford to New Hartford to sample the wares. “Emily King, the owner of Six Spoons, exceeded my expectations with every detail of her shop. ... From the glass counters’ full of fudges and chocolate barks to the beautifully displayed chocolate covered espresso beans and, oh, be still my heart – the Peanut Butter Crisps. The same recipe from Crand's. ... Emily is an incredible soul with a heart for family, kids and sweets.”

Crand’s set the standard for generations of young people who worked within its walls. “That’s where I learned everything,” said King. “We made everything there, even candy canes and ribbon candy. I learned things most people never have.”

https://berkshirestyle.com/features/Six_Spoons_Chocolatier.html

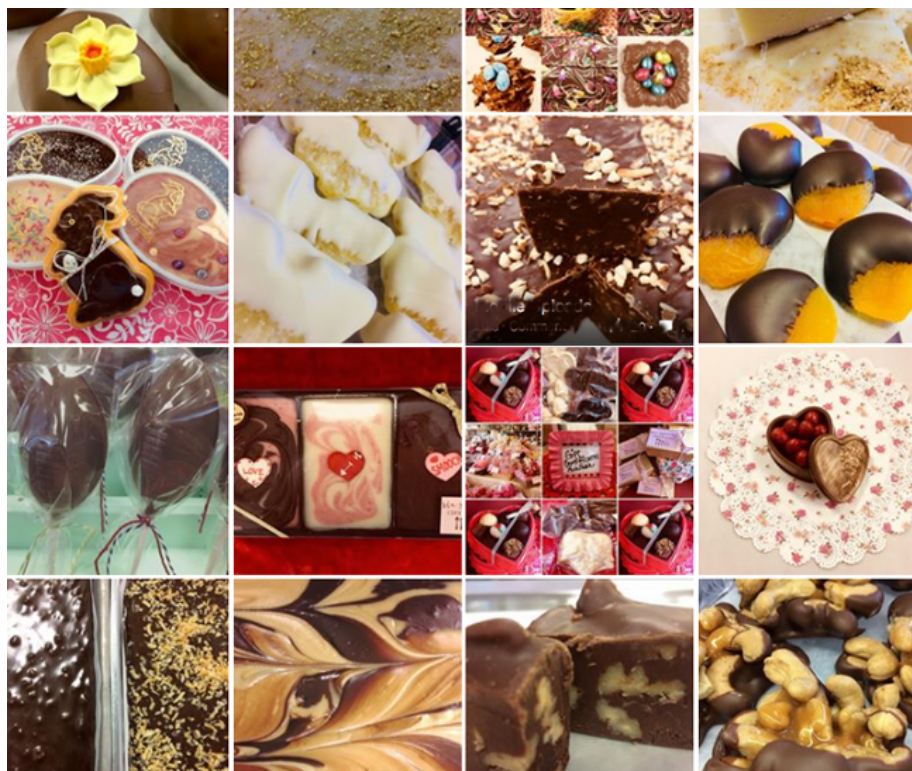
Below are some photos of Emily’s store and her wares.



Exterior of Six Spoons Chocolatier



Interior of Six Spoons Chocolatier



**Chocolates and candies at
Six Spoons Chocolatier**

Conclusions

Folks from all around Enfield, including Windsor Locks, often made the pilgrimage to *Crand's Candy Castle* for handmade chocolates and candies. Those who shopped at Crand's will never forget the building, the people, the aroma and the excitement. The Crand family ran their business from 1953 to 2001.

That was not the end of Crand's. In 2018, Emily King, who used to work at Crand's, and learned the recipes and techniques that the Crand family used, opened a candy store named *Six Spoons Chocolatier* in New Hartford, where she is carrying on the Crand's tradition for excellence in handmade chocolates and candies.

The following photo shows what the Crand's Candy Castle house looks like now (2018).



**The house that used to be
Crand's Candy Castle**

Sources:

(Throwback Thursday, Enfield Patch, by Tim Jensen, May 3, 2018)

The *Windsor Locks Journal* ads are shown with their dates of publication.

Springfield Union, Dec. 19, 1982

The *Hartford Courant* , June 11, 2001

<https://www.facebook.com/sixspoonschocolate/>

Review of Six Spoons Chocolatier, Katheryn Boughton,
[https://berkshirestyle.com/features/Six Spoons Chocolatier.html](https://berkshirestyle.com/features/Six_Spoons_Chocolatier.html)

Much of the information for this article came from Emily King, who worked at Crand's Candy Castle, and after that store closed, opened up her own candy making store. She also sent photos of the interior of Crands Candy Castle as well as photos of her new shop.

Chapter 20

Lillian's Shop on Main Street

The 1940s and 1950s were the Golden Age of Windsor Locks' Main Street shopping area. This was the shopping area that people came to, not only from Windsor Locks but from surrounding towns. There were large supermarkets like the A&P and the First National, small local grocery stores such as Sisitzky's Market, LaRussa's appliance store, restaurants such as Bianchi's and Shonty's and the Donut Kettle, pharmacies such as Charland's, hardware stores such as Carlisle's, shoe stores such as Kargas' and Jenkins', and the list goes on. Each of these stores had a unique personality. Only one of those stores just catered to women. It was Lillian's Shoppe, which was owned and operated by Lillian Ambrosini. In the photo below, notice the 1940s cars, and the good shape that the buildings were in. The reason for some of the open windows is that air conditioning had not been invented yet.



Lillian's Shop, Main St., between Oak & Spring Sts

Lillian (LaRussa) Ambrosini was born on September 22, 1912 in Birmingham, Alabama. She was the fourth of nine children of Antonio and Antonina (Salandino) LaRussa. She was the sister of Don LaRussa, whose store wasn't far from hers. She was the wife of Edward Joseph Ambrosini, Jr, who

passed away in 1975. Lillian's Shop was owned operated by Lillian and her sister, Frances. They had a second store in Hazardville. Lillian was known for her cheerfulness and her sense of humor. Lillian had a daughter, Jean, and a son, Don.

Doing research on Lillian's Shop was challenging. A computer search of the *Windsor Locks Journal* showed that "Lillian's Shoppe" opened in 1946. There were 53 ads in the issues from 1946 through 1951. However, Lillian's was in business after that. After trying a number of different ways of searching the *Windsor Locks Journal* Archives, a search on "Lillian's Shop," turned up 49 more ads for the business under its slightly changed name from 1951 through 1956. As we shall see, she moved the location of her store in about 1949, and she changed the spelling from Shoppe to Shop. For the life of the store, from 1946 to 1956, she had placed ads in the local newspaper. Those ads give good insight into the nature of the store.

JUST RECEIVED

Printed Percales
At 69c a Yd.

Curtain Rods
Flat, Double and Single Sash
And Extensions
Will Not Rust Or Sag
Single 15c Double 25c

Week-End Special !
Ladies Slips
Black, Peach And Pink
Sizes 32-40—\$2.00

LILLIAN'S SHOPPE
Cor. of Main and Oak Sts.
2nd Floor—Former Draft Board Office
Windsor Locks

Telephone 878 Lillian Ambrosini Propr.

Sept. 9, 1946, Windsor Locks Journal

Above is the first ad, which was in the Sept, 9, 1946 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal*. The ad is quite interesting. It tells us that the phone number of the store was 878. We see her store was on the second floor, in the area that used to be the Draft Board Office. She sold percale cloth for 69 cents a yard, along with curtain rods and accessories. She was having a special on Ladies Slips for only \$2 each.

WEEK-END SPECIAL!

Ladies' Cotton Dresses
Sizes 14 to 44

Prints—Front Pleats, Gores
And Button Fronts

Colors—Navy, Green, Blue, Pink
OPA Ceiling -- \$3.40

Our Price -- \$3.00

LILLIAN'S SHOPPE

Cor. of Main and Oak Sts.
2nd Floor—Former Draft Board Office
Windsor Locks

Telephone 878

Lillian Ambrosini Propr.

Oct.9,1946 Windsor Locks Journal

GIRLS' DUNGAREES

Many with Red Stitching
Sizes 7 - 14

\$1.95

Ladies' Rayon Slacks
Brown and Navy
Sizes 12 - 18

\$3.95

Ladies' Jersey Petticoats
White and Blue
\$1.98

others at **\$2.98 - \$4.25 - \$4.49**

Black - White - Rose

Ladies' Krinkle Crepe Pajamas
Peach and Blue - **\$3.49**

Prints \$3.95—sizes 34 to 40

—NEW SHIPMENT ON

Infants' and Children's Wear
ALSO

LADIES' COTTON DRESSES

\$3.95 - \$4.95

SIZES 12 - 44

LILLIAN'S SHOPPE

Cor. of Main and Oak Sts.

Windsor Locks

Telephone 878

Lillian Ambrosini Prop.

Sept.17,1947
Windsor Locks Journal

In the above ad on the left, which was from the October 3,1946 issue, she is selling Ladies Cotton Dresses from only \$3.00. The dress sizes only went down to size 14. The way that dress sizes are listed has changed over the decades.

The above ad on the right is from the Sept. 17, 1947 *Windsor Locks Journal*, we see a greater variety of ladies clothing, as well as infant's and children's wear.

At LILLIAN'S

JUST RECEIVED
A COMPLETE LINE OF LADIES' BRASSIERES
INCLUDING
NURSING BRASSIERES



LILLIAN'S SHOPPE
Corner Main and Oak Streets Windsor Locks
Lillian Ambrosini Propr.

Aug.5, 1948
Windsor Locks Journal

LILLIAN'S SHOPPE

LOCATED ON THE CORNER
MAIN AND OAK STREETS
(FORMERLY THE DRAFT BOARD)

Specializing In

LINENS	DRY GOODS
COSTUME JEWELRY	
CURTAINS	LADIES WEAR

Will Open

Thursday, August 29th

Lillian Ambrosini, Propr.
Telephone 878

Aug.22.1948
Windsor Locks Journal

The above two ads are from 1948 issues of the Journal, and they show even more types of items for sale. All of the ads up to this date show that Lillian's was on the second floor of the building on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. As you will see below, all of the later ads show that the store had moved to its second location, at 144 Main St, next to the Donut Kettle. That is where Lillian's is shown in the photo at the beginning of this article. Also, they have a new phone number, 1011.

The ad to the right was in the April 13, 1950 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* and shows nylons for only \$1.39 per pair. It is important to note that the first pair you buy comes with a one week guarantee. The second pair comes with a two week guarantee. The word "Visa" shows up in the ad, but it doesn't refer to the credit card, since they hadn't been invented yet. It is one of the four colors of nylon stockings that were available.

**WEEKEND SPECIALS
AT LILLIAN'S SHOP**

•

LADIES' BLOUSES
Regular \$2.98 and \$3.98—All Sizes
\$1.98

Cottons and Dacrons
Short Sleeves and Sleeveless
STOCK UP NOW!

•

WE GIVE S & H GREEN STAMPS
Double Stamps All Day Wednesdays

LILLIAN'S SHOP
144 Main Street Windsor Locks

April 6, 1956
Windsor Locks Journal

The above ad is from April 6, 1956, and shows that Lillian's was giving S&H Green Stamps. S&H Green Stamps were popular in the US from the 1930s to the 1980s. You could exchange your stamps for a wide variety of items at S&H stores.

LIFE

INSURED*
AGAINST
RUNS
regardless
of cause!

Ironwear

37 gauge sheer
full fashioned
NYLONS
\$1.39
a pair

Beautifully sheer, yet so
durable, we dare to insure them!

- Double welt strengthens garter points.
- Protective Garter Block (Pat. Pend.) guards against runs, holds seams straight.
- High twist in leg yarn adds strength and sheerness.
- Protective finish provides snag resistance.
- Proportioned lengths — registered number on each pair and attached insurance card.

VISA (Neutral) COPPERSKY (Coppery Shade)
DAWN TAUPÉ (Taupe-Tone) WHITE

Sizes 8 1/2 to 17

*First pair insured for one week
Second pair insured for double this term.

LILLIAN'S SHOPPE
144 Main Street
Windsor Locks
Telephone 1011

April 13, 1950
WLJ

Finally, we come to Lillian's last ad, which is shown below. It was in the November 20, 1956 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal*. Her inventory was worth \$50,000. It is interesting that at this point, she was also selling Men's clothing.

NOVEMBER 20, 1956

Quitting Business

IN WINDSOR LOCKS
Entire \$50,000 Stock Liquidation
WOMEN'S MEN'S CHILDREN'S WEAR
AT SACRIFICE PRICES
SALE STARTS FRIDAY AT 10 A. M.
Store Hours During Sale—9 A. M. To 9 P. M.
SATURDAY 9 A. M. TO 6 P. M.
FREE NYLONS TO THE FIRST 50 LADIES
THROUGH OUR DOOR AT OPENING FRIDAY
STORE CLOSED MONDAY THRU THURSDAY
LILLIAN'S SHOP **144 MAIN STREET**
WINDSOR LOCKS

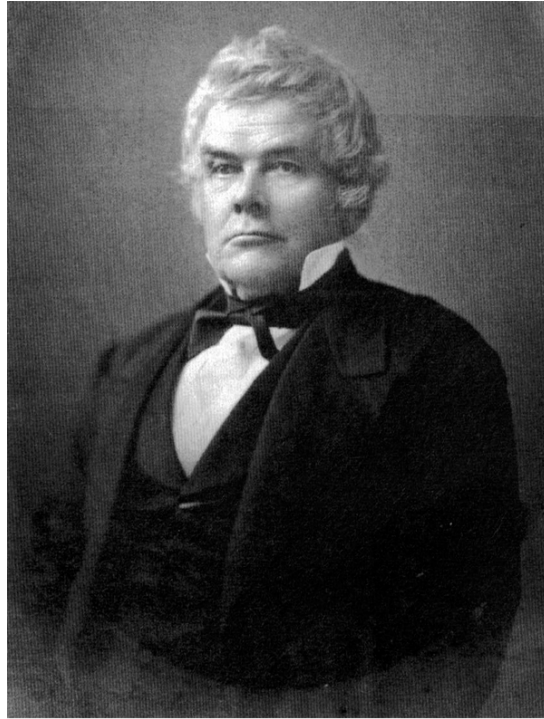
Lillian died on June 8, 2005. Her obituary showed that she was not only a shop-owner, but a proud mother and grandmother. She had two grandchildren, Dr. James Devine, and Dr. Susan Devine. You can see why she was a proud grandmother. Dr. Susan Devine and her husband Robert Baillargeon, helped search for information on Lillian's store and her life.

Sources

- the dates of the *Windsor Locks Journal* ads are listed along with each of the ads.
- Lillian Ambrosini's obituary can be found at:
<https://obitree.com/obituary/us/connecticut/enfield/browne-memorial-funeral-chapels/lillian-ambrosini/391211/>

Chapter 21

Eli Horton and His Lathe Chuck Company



Eli Horton 1803-1878

The story of Eli Horton is a fascinating one. No history of his company could be found. This article is an attempt to put together the pieces of that story which exist into a coherent whole. There is one problem with telling the story. It is that the story is based on differences in lathe chucks which are easily understood by experts in the field, but difficult for non-experts to understand.

Introduction (what is a lathe, and what is a chuck?)

Let us begin with a description of what a lathe is, and what a chuck is. A lathe is a tool for spinning a piece of wood or metal, so that it can be shaped by a cutting tool. Lathes are not new. They were known to exist in the Fourteenth Century before Christ. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chuck_\(engineering\)\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chuck_(engineering))) Back then, they were only used for shaping wood. In the 1800s, they were also used for shaping metal.

The workpiece has to be attached to the lathe in two places. In most cases, the workpiece is attached by means of two clamps, which are called chucks. A chuck has 2, 3, 4 or more “Jaws” which form a clamp to hold the

workpiece. In the early 1800s, these jaws had to be adjusted individually, which often caused the workpiece to be “off-center,” and thus need to be readjusted.

Then, someone came up with an idea for a way of making all of the jaws open and close with a single screw. This would ensure that the workpiece was always “centered”. If a workpiece is not centered, it will wobble when the lathe is turned on. If the wobble is too great, the workpiece can be thrown off of the lathe causing injury. So the idea of a chuck which is easy to use, and guarantees that the workpiece is centered was a big step forward. A self-centering chuck that can be adjusted with a single screw is called a “scroll chuck” or a “universal chuck”.

Eli Horton forms his company

With the background provided in the Introduction, the story of Eli Horton and his company can be told. The booklet “The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954,” which was published for the Windsor Locks Centennial celebration in 1954, briefly describes what happened. The first patent for a scroll or universal chuck was granted to Simon Fairman in 1834. He had a small shop in West Stafford, Ct. which made chucks and other products. He got a patent on a scroll (universal) chuck in 1834. His group of machinists made chucks for about ten years, before some of his employees began to break off and start their own shops. One of them was Eli Horton. Like the others who worked for Mr. Fairman, he saw a big future in making chucks.

According to the “Vintage Machinery” website, Eli Horton patented a lathe chuck in 1855 that was subsequently manufactured by E. Horton & Son Company. The firm would later claim to have been established in 1851. Eli Horton's original lathe chuck design, which could be used as both a universal chuck or an independent 4-jaw chuck. Other designs were available in sizes up to 42 inches in diameter.

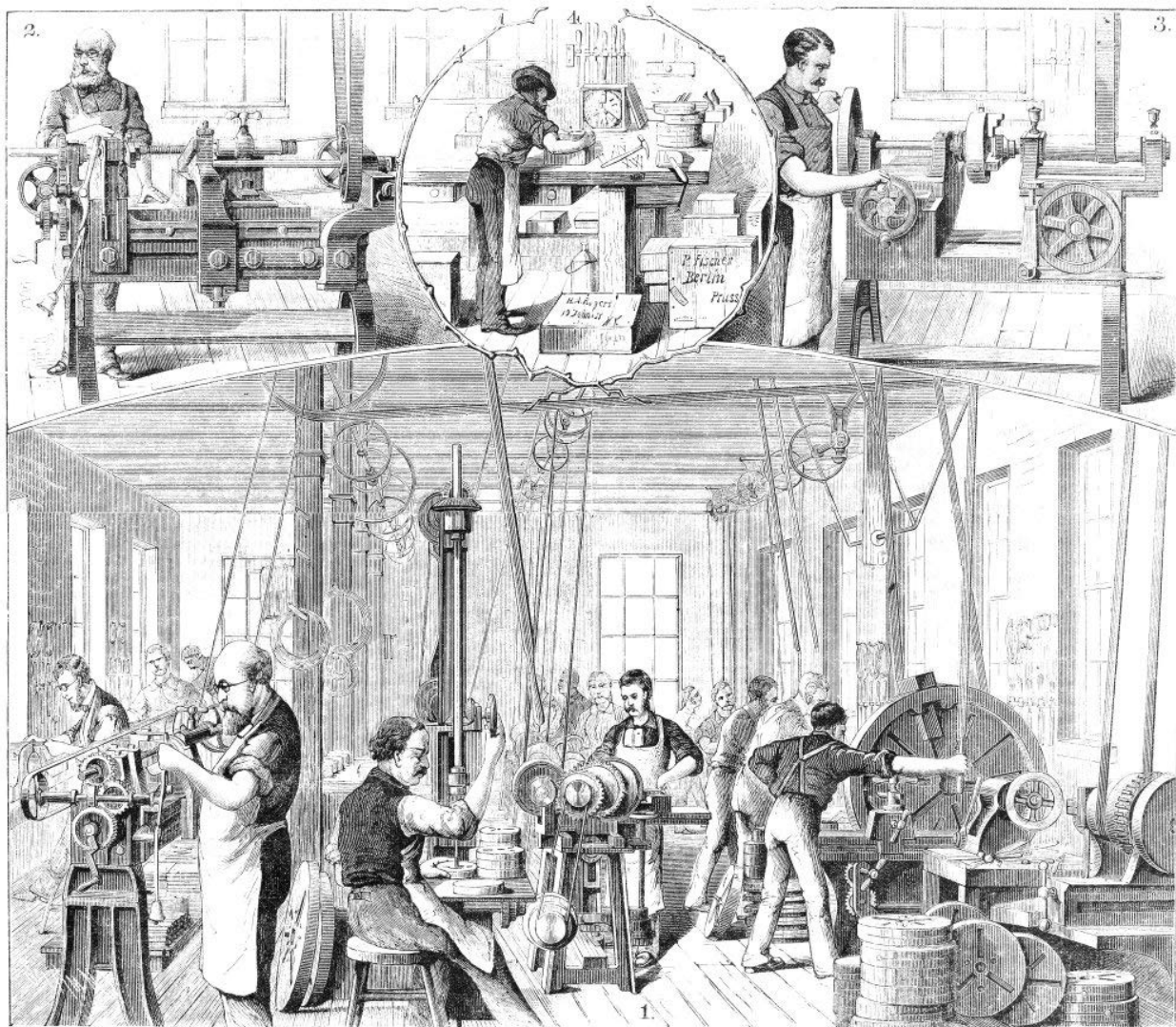
<http://vintagemachinery.org/mfgindex/detail.aspx?id=10524>

What was the difference between Eli Horton's patent and Simon Fairman's patent? The Vintage Machinery website provides the answer.

“The scroll chuck was the product that launched the successful manufacturer, E. Horton & Son Co. Besides this chuck, they also manufactured hand drills and machine tools. The chuck was written up on the front page of the 1856-04-12 issue of Scientific American. The innovation is the use of jaws with a raised seat that is designed to be ground after hardening so as to be more precise.”

<http://vintagemachinery.org/mfgindex/detail.aspx?id=10524&tab=7>

The following is an 1880s woodcut which depicts the mill and its workers in action.



THE MANUFACTURE OF UNIVERSAL CHUCKS.—THE E. HORTON & SON COMPANY WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

The following advertisement helps you visualize the chucks that Eli Horton was manufacturing.

HORTON—A Complete Line

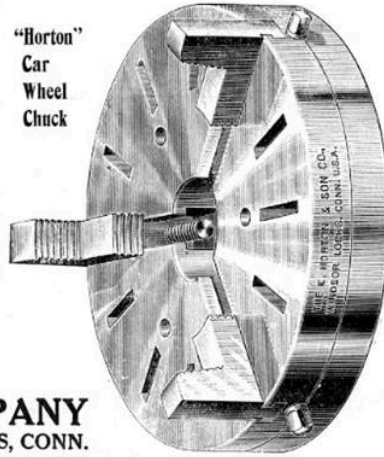
The "Horton" Line of chucks and Face Plate Jaws is now complete, comprising types for all classes of work, from light to heavy—and the quality is "Horton" throughout.

The consolidation of the S. E. Horton Machine Company and the E. Horton & Son Company combines the heaviest and most substantial patterns ever developed with the finest and most accurate line of smaller chucks—all under the name "Horton."

We'll be glad to send full details on the chuck to fill your requirements. Write us.

THE E. HORTON & SON COMPANY
S. E. HORTON, Pres. WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

"Horton"
Car
Wheel
Chuck



Advertisement from August 1912 Machinery

The following ad shows how the chuck worked. You can see two hands on the left, turning the "key" which opens and closes all of the jaws at once. You can also see how large that chucks could be.

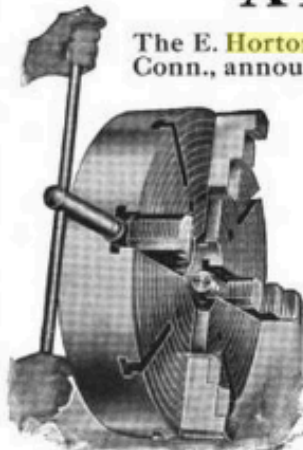
ANNOUNCEMENT

The E. Horton & Son Co. and The S. E. Horton Machine Co., of Windsor Locks, Conn., announce their consolidation, which will place under one management one of the most complete lines of chucks of all classes.

Every possible advantage in manufacturing equipment, thoroughly trained mechanics and location in the town where chuck making has become second nature to every machinist, is secured to the consolidated company.

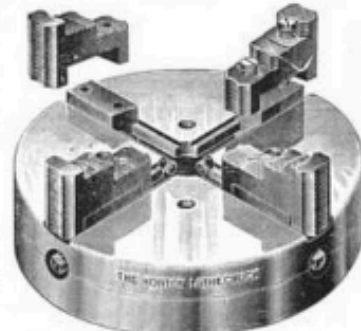
The products of The E. Horton & Son Co. are justly celebrated, wherever chucks are used, for quality of workmanship, accuracy and durability, due to the constant use of high grade materials only and great care in their manufacture.

The special S. E. Horton chucks and face plate jaws, STEEL, as well as iron, are without question the heaviest designed and most substantial tools of their class. The qualities that have won for them an enviable popularity will be maintained.



S. E. HORTON CHUCKS

Large screws and wider bearing jaws enable a 19-inch wrench to be used on an 18-inch. And this means that you can get the proper leverage.



HORTON COMBINATION CHUCKS

With Reversible Jaws, practically as strong as solid jaws. 3 or 4 Jaw, all sizes. Also all types of universal chucks.

The trade is assured that the same liberal and dependable policies that have in the past characterized the relations of both companies with it, will be maintained by the consolidated

company, which hopes for a continuance of the cordial relations and liberal patronage at its hands that have heretofore been enjoyed.

THE E. HORTON & SON COMPANY
WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

Below is an early photo of the E. Horton & Son Co manufacturing plant. The



**The E. Horton & Son Co.
Lathe Chucks**

first history book on Windsor Locks was written by Henry R. Stiles. It was "The History and Genealogies of Ancient Windsor, including East Windsor, South Windsor, Bloomfield, Windsor Locks and Ellington: 1635-1891". It was published by Case, Lockwood and Brainard, Hartford, Conn. 1891. He states:

"1851. Eli Horton, a resident at the Locks, this year invented a lathe-chuck superceding all previous inventions in that line, and he began its manufacture in a small way in the old Seymour Paper Mill, employing at first, beside his son, S. Ellsworth Horton, only one workman. The business increasing, he removed to the building now occupied by J. R. Montgomery & Co., where one room was used; and about 1865, he built the large shops where the works are now located. A large trade was created and the Horton chuck to-day stands without a peer in excellence of workmanship and materials used. In 1873, on the death of his son, the business was changed into a corporation, the E. Horton & Son Co. About twelve years ago, after the death of Mr. Horton, E. B. Bailey assumed charge of the business, and by successful management it has grown so that now, the present mill is adequate to meet all demands made upon it. A few years ago, all the old machinery was removed, and automatic machinery, made at a large cost, put in. At the time, Mr. Bailey assumed charge of the company and made a few

kinds of chucks; now over 300 different kinds and styles are made, from those large enough to hold a drill the size of a needle to those of forty-eight inches in diameter, capable of holding a large car wheel.”

In 1890, Eli Horton bought a foundry that was located next to his factory, from Mr. A. W. Converse, who inherited it from his father. (*The Springfield Republican*, April 22, 1890)

The writeup in the “Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954” continues Eli Horton story as follows:

“The Horton company earned an international reputation with their excellent chucks, receiving awards from Vienna, Melbourne, Liege and Paris, as well as many American cities holding industrial expositions.

The outbreak of World War I found Eli Horton’s grandson, Ellsworth, at the head of the company. Under his energetic influence, the Company greatly expanded its line of chucks and acquired more production space.

In 1948 the E. Horton and Son Co was taken over by a new young and energetic management. Under their direction, the plant was completely renovated and modernized so that they could compete favorably in postwar competition.

The new management recognized the need for greater product diversification and so in 1949, the company merged with the Gabb Manufacturing Company, then located in East Hartford. The E. Horton and Son Company became the parent company of two Divisions, Horton Chucks and Gabb Special Products.”

Below is a photo of the Horton plant at its peak.



E.Horton and Son Company

The *Windsor Locks Journal* issue of Jan. 6, 1949 had a single statement about the E. Horton and Son Company. It was in long paragraphs about miscellaneous and unrelated happenings. It said: "The E. Horton and Son Company has been sold to Hartford men, Donald B. Hunting, Douglas H. Thompson, Jr., H. Bissell Carey and Paul W. Adams." It gave no other information about the sale.

The *Windsor Locks Journal* issue of Jan. 25, 1973 explains what happened. It said that this was the 25th anniversary of the ownership of the Connecticut International Corporation by Douglas H. Thompson, and that that company had become one of the nation's foremost manufacturers of aviation lighting equipment. It goes on to explain that the company that Douglas H. Thompson had bought in 1949 had two pieces, the Eli Horton and Son Company and the Gabb Special Products Company. It said that the Eli Horton company had sold high quality lathe chucks for over 100 years, but it said nothing more about it. The rest of the long article was about the Gabb work on aviation equipment. That explains the mysterious one sentence in the January 6, 1949 article about Douglas H. Thompson buying the Eli Horton and Son company. It became part of the Connecticut International Corporation.

Further search of the *Windsor Locks Journal* archives sheds more light on the situation. During the 1950s, there were numerous articles about the E. Horton and Son Company, but they didn't mention it being owned by the Connecticut International Corporation. The November 12, 1959 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* tells of a new magazine company occupying space in "the former Horton plant." This tells us that the Horton company was no longer in existence.

A *Windsor Locks Journal* article on Nov. 25, 1955, has D. H. Thompson announcing a wage increase for E. Horton and Son Company employees. Another in the Nov. 29, 1956 issue saying that E. Horton and Company is doing well.

In the Nov. 20, 1962 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal*, D. H. Thompson is listed as the president of Gabb Special Products. No mention is made of E. Horton and Son Company. All of this tells us that the E. Horton and Son Company went out of existence prior to November 12, 1959.

Earlier in this article, there was a quote from the "Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954," which said that energetic new management took over the Horton company in 1948/1949. We now know that meant. It meant that the company was bought by D.H. Thompson's Connecticut International Corporation.

The E. Horton and Son Company was a distinguished company for a long time. It is disappointing to not find an article in the *Windsor Locks Journal* that states and describes how the company ended. From what we have seen, it had been bought by the Connecticut General Corporation, and then ceased to be a part of it. No later references to the E. Horton and Son Company could be found in the *Windsor Locks Journal*.

The following photograph show that the E. Horton and Son Company building was destroyed by fire in 2006.



**Eli Horton & Son mill is to the left.
It was destroyed by fire in 2006**

The above story of Eli Horton and his company made no mention of his family. Eli Horton was born in Union, Connecticut on 6 May 1803. He died in Windsor Locks on 13 Dec 1878 at the age of 75. He is buried in the Horton family plot in Grove Cemetery.

Eli Horton was born in Union, Connecticut, on May 6, 1803. He married Katherine E. Ellsworth of East Windsor on January 25, 1832. They had four children:

- Stoddard Ellsworth, born on March 31, 1833
- Anna Ellsworth, born on September 17, 1835.
- Kate Elsie, born on January 6, 1837; m. Ezra B. Bailey, of Franklin, Conn., December 14, 1870.
- Eli, born on August 24, 1839

Eli Horton was buried in the Horton family plot in Grove Cemetery in Windsor Locks.

Eli Horton's daughter, Kate, married Ezra B. Bailey, who became head of Eli Horton and Son Company. Mr. Bailey became president of the

company after the death of Eli Horton's son, Eli. Eli Horton traced his ancestry to John and Priscilla Alden, who are well known early Puritans. <https://www.practicalmachinist.com/vb/general/curious-about-horton-chucks-160848/>

Conclusion

We have traced the history of Eli Horton's company. His lathe chucks were of the highest quality, and won awards both nationally and internationally. The reason for his success was his focus on quality. The company lasted through two world wars. Finally it was bought out, and it came to an end in the 1950s. While the reasons for its demise have not been found in the literature, one can assume that they were similar to the reasons that the other manufacturing companies along the canal came to an end by the 1950s. It was the same reason that manufacturing, which had been the major focus of United States business up to then, died out in that timeframe. The US economy, which had focussed on manufacturing, moved to a focus on service. Manufacturing moved overseas, where it could be done more cheaply. When Horton began his career, chucks were hard to use. He found ways to make them easier to use, and his company flourished. But as time went on, chucks became commonplace throughout the world, and business became far more competitive.

Eli Horton was an excellent machinist. He had keen mind for figuring out to improve the quality and usability of chucks. He also had a keen mind and temperament for business. He created a business that employed many and lasted for a century.

Sources:

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chuck_\(engineering\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chuck_(engineering)))

<http://vintagemachinery.org/mfgindex/detail.aspx?id=10524>

<http://vintagemachinery.org/mfgindex/detail.aspx?id=10524&tab=7>

"The History and Genealogies of Ancient Windsor, including East Windsor South Windsor, Bloomfield, Henry R. Stiles, Windsor Locks and Ellington: 1635-1891". ,Case, Lockwood and Brainard, Hartford, Conn. 1891.

The Springfield Republican, April 22, 1890

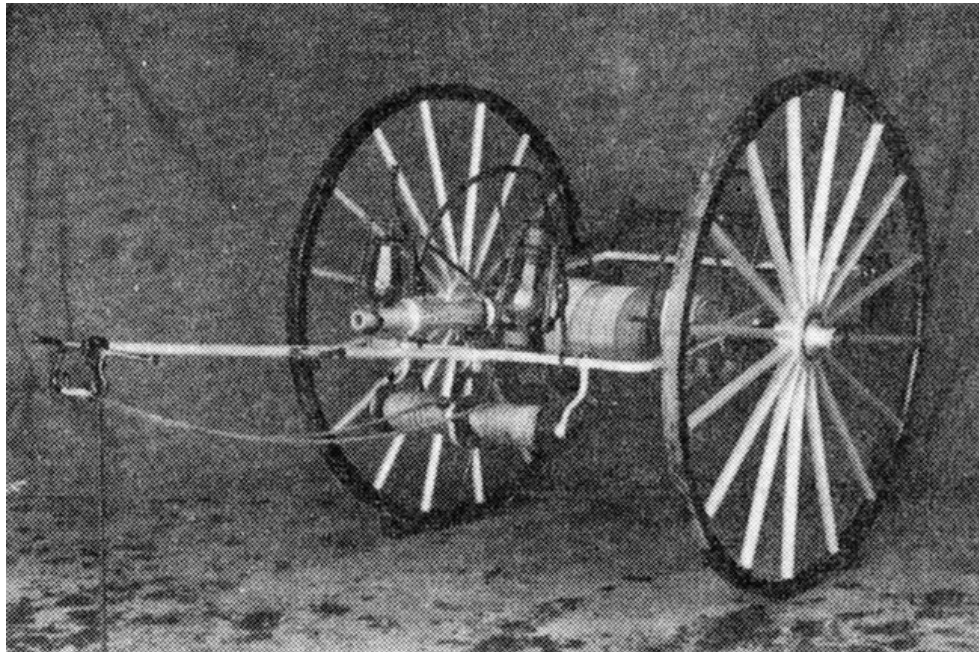
Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954, The Historical Subcommittee of the Windsor Locks Centennial Committee, Windsor Locks, 1954.

<https://www.practicalmachinist.com/vb/general/curious-about-horton-chucks-160848/>

Chapter 22

Windsor Locks Fire Department

Exactly what caused Windsor Locks to form a Fire Department is not known. Historian Mickey Danyluk said that it might have been a fire at Dr. Sidney Burnap's mansion. In any case, the town of Windsor Locks formed a Fire Department in 1890, just 36 years after Windsor Locks was incorporated as a township in 1854. John Egan was the first Fire Chief. He served from 1890 to 1906. Twenty-eight fire hydrants were installed on the central streets of the town. The new fire company had monthly drills on the fundamentals of fire fighting at the time: laying hose, erecting ladders, etc. The Fire Department purchased 1000 feet of hose and a hose carriage. See photo below.



1890 Hose Cart

The next year, they bought a horse-drawn Hook and Ladder truck, which carried ladders that could be extended to 60 feet. In 1918, the town bought a Reo truck for using chemicals to fight fires. In 1925, they bought an American LaFrance pumper, which was called Engine No. 1. In 1936, that was replaced with a 500 gallon per minute pumper made by American LaFrance. It was in service from 1936 to 1968. It became affectionately known as "Old Engine No. 2," and it is now housed at the Noden Reed farm. See photo below.



Old Engine No. 2 - 1995

The first fire alarm in Windsor Locks was a bell on the Medlicott Building near the canal bank. Later a steam whistle on the Seymour Paper Mill was also used as an alarm. In 1896, the town got its first electric fire alarm system.

In 1961, all of the firemen were issued home alert receivers which told them of the location and nature of an emergency.

The Fire Department formed a Fife and Drum Corps in 1965. It was active until about 1991, although they got together a few more times after that, including for the 150th Anniversary of Windsor Locks in 2004. See photo below.



**Windsor Locks Fire Department
Fife and Drum Corps - 1965**

Members of the Fire Department formed a second Fife and Drum Corps in 1984. It was called the Old Engine No. 2 Fife and Drum Corps. It was formed to march in parades that the Fire Department didn't or couldn't make. The most important of those was the 1985 parade in New Haven, CT for Connecticut's 350th anniversary. They loaded the old fire truck on a flatbed truck and marched in that parade. They also played at Little League games and in other parades that weren't fire department events. Below is a photo of them in 1991.



Windsor Locks Firemans' Fife & Drum Corps, 1991

The business of the Windsor Locks Fire Department is fighting fires. The first Fire Department, back in the 1890s was just called out a few times a year. By the 1990s, which is a century later, they were getting 350 calls a year. Over the years they have fought some serious fires. Here are photos of a few of them. The J. R. Montgomery Co fire was very difficult. Fire Trucks had to shoot water across the canal, over to the fire.



J.R. Montgomery Co. fire - 2010

Shonty's Bar and Restaurant burned down in 1967. It was one of several fires in the older buildings along Main Street.



Shonty's Bar and Restaurant fire - 1967

Another fire on Main Street happened at Sid's Modern Drug store in 1965.



Sid's Modern Drug fire - 1965

Blanche's Bowling Alley was near the corner of Grove St. and Main St., not far from Shonty's. It burned down in 1972.



*Blanche Bianchi's Bowling Alley destroyed by fire.
Princess Theater (old) was on top floor.*

The Railroad Freight Depot, which was next to the passenger railroad station on Main Street, burned down in 1977.



Freight Depot fire - 1977

Another fire on Main Street was the Bidwell Lumber Yard fire, which happened in 1958.



Bidwell Lumber Yard Fire -1958

One of the earliest fires that the Windsor Locks Fire Department faced was at the Windsor Locks Machine Company in 1903.



Windsor Locks Machine Co. Fire - 1903

Here is a photo of the Fire and Police Departments on Oak Street in 1977.



Fire and Police Station, Oak St, 1977

Below is a photo, taken at Bradley Field, of Fire Chief James Carroll with a ladder truck, that was taken in about 1960. He was Fire Chief from 1950 to 1964. He also owned and operated Carrolls Pharmacy.



Fire Chief James Carroll on Engine #3 ~1960

Here is a snapshot of five firemen relaxing.



**Firemen Francis Gragnolati, Bob Wesowicz, Bill Reilly,
Mike Rocconella and Dean Ribaud.**

Below is a photo of the Fire Department's Old Timers Night in 1967. Seated (left to right) are: Donald Hinkley, Charles Wallace, Charles Chippali, Elmer Leary, James Franklin, James Tambussi, Thomas Little. Standing (Left to right) are: Joseph Halloran, Frederick Kennedy, Irving Ball, Joseph Calsetta, John Cane, Frank Silk and Fint Wallace.



Fire Department - Old Timers Night - 1967

In 1966, the Fire Department did a demonstration behind St. Mary's School. The three men are Ray Ouellette, Joe Gatti and Bill Reilly.



Fire Dept demonstration, Pesci Park - 1966

The 1967 Firemen's Parade in Windsor Locks was briefly led by David Walters at the age of two and a half.



1967 Firemen's Parade led by David Walters, 2 1/2

Below is a photo from the Fire Department's 100th Anniversary celebration in 1990.



Windsor Locks Fire Dept 100th Anniversary - 1990

Conclusion and Sources

This was a brief historical overview of the Windsor Locks Fire Department. A booklet entitled "Windsor Locks Fire Department," which was published on July 13, 1990, for the celebration of their 100 year anniversary, gives more detail. The first page of this chapter was abstracted from that booklet. A thorough history of the Windsor Locks fire department would require a couple of volumes.

The photos in this chapter are from two sources. Jerry Dougherty has a website that has over 115,000 photos. It is actually a collection of collections. One is a collection of over 2,100 photos of the Windsor Locks Fire Department, which can be found at:

Jerry Dougherty's collection of Fire Department photos can be found at:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gcdougherty/albums/72157631010694322/page1>

Frank Baron's collection can be found on Jerry Dougherty's website at:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gcdougherty/albums/72157629625604715>

Chapter 23

Windsor Locks Police Department

The years from 1910 to 1920 were important ones for the Town of Windsor Locks. In 1910, the population of the town was 3,715.

1911 - A sewer system was put in place.

1912 - Sidewalks were installed.

1915 - The Chamber of Commerce was organized.

1918 - A new town building was dedicated on Oak Street.

1919 - A lot on Grove and Center Streets was purchased for a playground.

(From *The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954*)

In 1915, Main Street had a trolley, the Burnap Block and the Charter Oak Hotel. Motor vehicles were beginning to be seen in town.



Main St. 1915. Brick building is the Burnap Block. Next is Charter Oak Hotel.

That is what the town was like when the Windsor Locks Police Department was organized in 1916.

The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954 described how “police duties” were handled prior to the founding of the Police Department in 1916:

“The two most important officials in the first days of the Colony were the magistrates who were sent as delegates to the General Court, and the constables. Both groups of officers were elected each year by the freemen of the town. The duties that now devolve upon the Selectmen of the town were performed by the magistrates, and for a time they exercised judicial functions also. The constable, in addition to his traditional duties, published the laws, levied the town’s share of taxes for the Commonwealth, and notified the freemen of the Meetings of the General Court, the time and place of elections of deputies. In later days, the constables were strictly law enforcement officers, chosen at town elections and operating on a part-time basis. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, this method of police protection was rapidly becoming outmoded.”

A copy of an unidentified local newspaper article of Feb. 1, 1913 describes the pressure that was mounting in Windsor Locks to have a real Police Department. It said that Windsor Locks was one of the last towns in Connecticut to stick to the old ways. It said: “ in the case of a community like Windsor Locks, where the population is closely congested, and all of the commercial establishments are within a radius of 100 yards, the system is a failure, at best.” It was referring to the problems of relying on part-time constables.

When the Windsor Locks Police Department was founded in 1916, they had three uniformed patrolmen. That number didn’t increase for a long time. The Police Chief’s office was in the Bidwell Building. The town built a new building for the Police and Fire Department in 1917, and it was in use in later that year. The *Windsor Locks Journal* of March 8, 1917 described the new building, saying: “The Chief’s office is at the east end of the front part of the building, with a door leading into the courtroom at the rear, as well as one into the hallway from the main entrance to the street. In the basement are the cells for prisoners and also an inclosure for sheltering the transients who apply for lodging overnight.”

The Police Department had been in operation for about six months, when the *Windsor Locks Journal* posted an article listing the incidents which the police had taken care of. The list contained:

- 57 people locked up for safe keeping and afterward sent home or elsewhere.
- 19 disturbances suppressed.
- 1 unhitched horse on the street.
- Compelled several loitering persons to move on.
- 11 Electric lights not burning.
- 3 automobile accidents.

- 9 suspicious persons kept under observation.
- 2 buildings found open and unsecured.
- 3 fires discovered
- 2 teams of horses found on the street and cared for in livery stable.
- 1 lost child returned to parents.
- 1 bank of gypsies driven out of town on three occasions.
-

There have been only 11 Police Chiefs from 1916 to 2019. Here is the list in the order that they served.

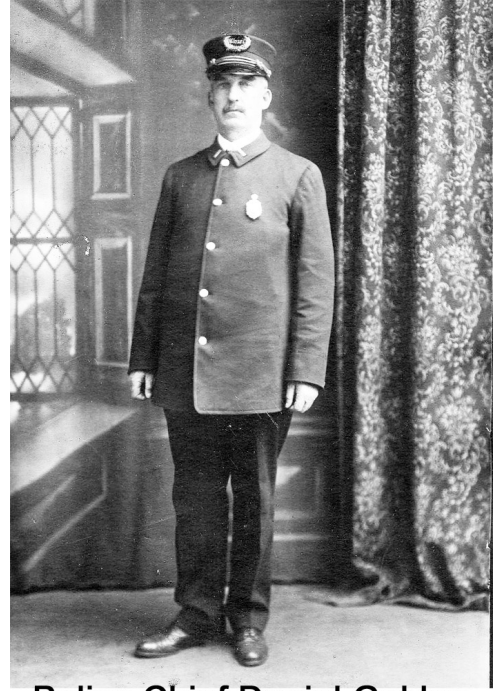
- 1 Timothy F. McCarty
- 2 Daniel Golden
- 3 William Hayden
- 4 Henry McMahon
- 5 John M Sullivan
- 6 James Henry Whitten
- 7 Bernard C "Lucky" Kulas
- 8 Harry Carroll
- 9 William j Gifford
- 10 John T. Suchocki
- 11 Eric Osanitsch

In 1917, during his first year as head of the new Police Department, Chief McCarty had a health problem and died while on trip to New York. He was replaced by Daniel Golden. Below is a photo of Chief Timothy McCarty.



**Police Chief
Timothy McCarty
1917**

On the right is a 1917 photo of Chief Daniel Golden, who replaced Chief McCarty in 1917. He served until he was replaced by William Hayden in 1921



**Police Chief Daniel Golden
1917**

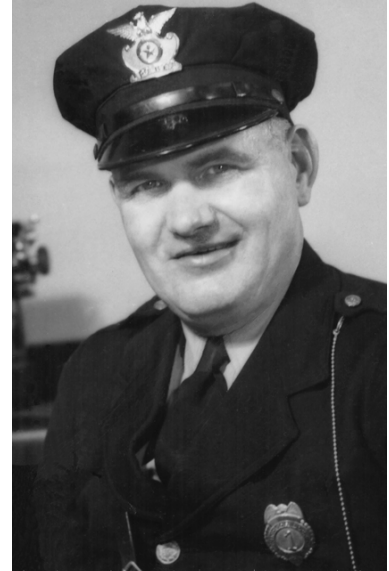
On the right is a photo of Leo Montemerlo, who was a Supernumerary for the Police Department in 1941. According to Frank Baron, Leo decided to give up his position as Supernumerary because the pay was too low. He took a job at the Medicott factory. This allowed Henry Whitten to take the full time position as a Supernumerary. Later Mr. Whitten became the Chief of Police. The photo of Leo Montemerlo was taken in back of Coly's Hotel. Leo had married Vito and Anna Colapietro's daughter, Lena.



**Supernumerary
Leo Montemero 1941**

Following are photos from the Police Department's files which were given to Frank Baron when the Department decided to do some housecleaning.

On the right is a photo of Windsor Locks' fifth Police Chief, John M. Sullivan, who served from 1945 to 1951.



John M. Sullivan
Police Chief: 1945-1951

The following photo was labeled "The Old Guard".



Civic Leaders and Members of Police Dept. 1945

Front Row (L-R) Anthony Bertussi, Charlie Walters, J. Henry Whitten, Jim Anderson, Charlie Zenzick. Middle Row (L-R) William Fitzpatrick, Phil Johnson, Francis Harvey, Chief John Sullivan, Edward Kennedy, Dexter Coffin, Back Row (L-R) Charlie Alexson, Patsy Lanati, Tom Silk, Mike Caffrey, Ed Silk, Armando Bianchi, Orrie Champigny, Edward Lally.



Police Contract Meeting ~ 1967

The above photo of a police contract meeting, which happened in about 1967. The participants were: Joseph O'Brien, William Leary, Bernard Seaha, Edward Savino, Benny D'Augustino, Robert McKenna, George Quagliaroli, Ferdinand Tiesing and Salvatore Tarascio.

The following is a promotion ceremony.



L-R: Bernie Seaha, Sgt. Russ Shelto, Capt. William Gifford, Chief J. Henry Whitten -1968

Below is a photo of the old Police and Fire Station. The Police Department had moved to a new location in 1975, and this building was converted into a Senior Center.



Fire and Police Station, Oak St, 1977



**Police Chief Whitten, Armando Bianchi and unidentified man
in front of Bianchi's Restaurant - 1971**



Police Dispatch Office - 1981

From left to right in the above photo are: Sgt. William Gifford, Unknown male, Fire Chief Jack Colli, First Selectman Edward Savino, Police Chief Bernard (Lucky) Kulas. Seated is Dispatcher Sandy Bernardi.



John McCloskey, Desk Officer



**Ed Savino, Walter Shea
Art Ciparelli, George Quagliaroli**

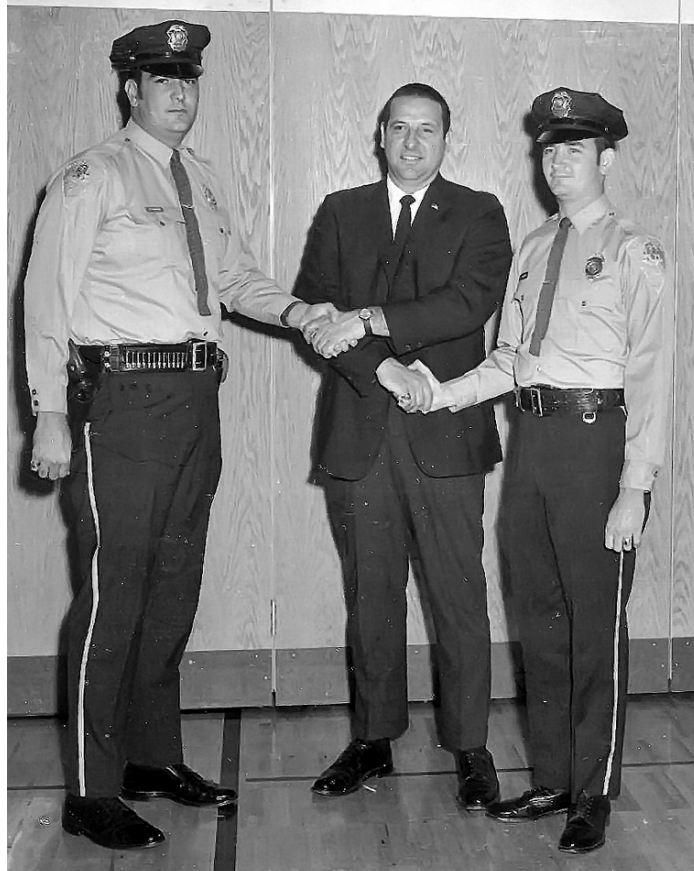


Lieutenant Russell Jubrey



Officer Richard Skowron

Officer Skowron later joined the East Windsor Police Department.



**Robert Francia, Edward Savino,
Thomas Allen**

In the following 1964 photo, Edward Savino, George Quagliaroli, and Karl Spielman are preparing for a school health fair at the Union School.



Preparing for School Health Fair



**Windsor Locks Police Dept.
Memorial Day Parade - 1940**



Windsor Locks Police Dept., Centennial Parade, 1954

The Centennial Parade photo was taken on Main Street, at the curve by the Railroad yard.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief overview of the Windsor Locks Police Department from its beginning in 1916 to about 1980. An in-depth history would take an entire book or more. Eighteen photos showed Windsor Locks police personnel in various roles from 1940 to 1981. This chapter could not have been written without the generous help of Mr. Frank Baron. He was a Windsor Locks policeman who knows the history of the police department, and has built an extensive collection of photographs of the police department as well as of the town of Windsor Locks.

Sources

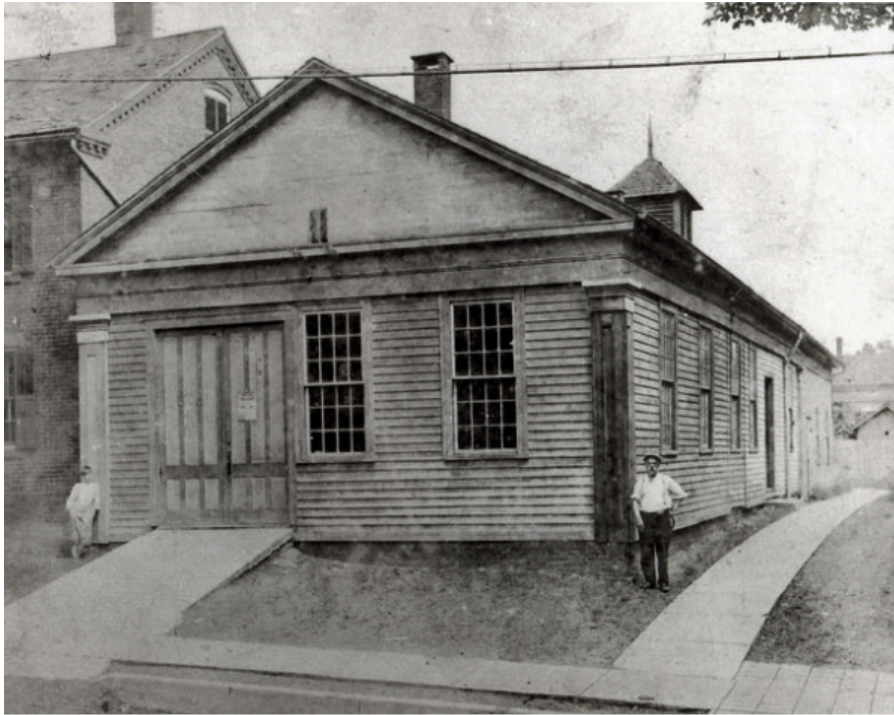
The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954, Historical Committee of the Windsor Locks Centennial Committee, Windsor Locks, CT, 1954

Frank Baron's collection can be found at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gcdougherty/albums/72157629625604715>

Chapter 24

Windsor Locks' Old Town Hall



Windsor Locks Town Hall. Oak St., Torn down in 1917

Windsor Locks has had many history-filled buildings. There was the Burnap Block with its Burnap Opera House, which became Central Hall. Central Hall became the A&P. There is the Railroad Passenger Station and Memorial Hall, the Burnap Mansion and the Ashmere Estate. Some of those buildings are still standing. Some are long gone.

There was an unimposing building on Oak Street which had a long, varied and distinguished history. It was demolished in 1917, so it is no longer known to most Windsor Locks Citizens. The purpose of this chapter is to give that building some of the visibility that it deserves. The story of the building is told in an article in the *Windsor Locks Journal* of October 19, 1917. It is easily available in the digital archive of the *Windsor Locks Journal*, but it is well hidden. Not many people go searching through the issues of the *Windsor Locks Journal* of 1917.

The building in the photo above was torn down in 1917 to make room for a new Fire and Police Department building. It had a long and storied past. It

was built in about 1838 as a one-room schoolhouse. Back then, Windsor Locks was part of Windsor, and this was the school for the northern part of the town. There was another school at the corner of Elm and Center Streets. In 1844, the village was divided into two school districts, so the school continued for about 20 years.

Another room was added to the back the building. Then the students could be divided into two groups. One was for the lower grades, and one for the higher grades.

In 1868, the Union School was built, and all of the grade were put in that building, so our building was free to be used for other purposes. The town of Windsor Locks began to use it for other purposes. It was used for voting, and for the annual town meeting. After the Civil War, the "Grand Army of the Republic," which was a club of civil war veterans, used the building for their meetings. The building was also used for dances.

In 1888, the Grand Army of the Republic, which was commonly referred to by its initials as the GAR, moved its headquarters to a building on Main Street. The *Windsor Locks Journal* of Oct. 19, 1917 eloquently described the history of the building this way:

"So the old building, despised and derided for so long, has been a schoolhouse, Grand Army Hall, Town Hall, Courthouse, and the little brick building in the rear has been a jail. A good many of the town's problems have been thrashed out in the little old hall. The walls have heard much oratory and if the story of all gatherings that have been held there could be told, it would make for an interesting one. Occasionally when the attendance at a town meeting was large, and things got warmed up, the floor would give away. It wasn't far to the ground and no harm could be done."

Sources:

"Historic Town Hall a Thing of the Past", *Windsor Locks Journal*, Oct. 19, 1917

Chapter 25

Shopping at G. Fox & Company in Hartford

Windsor Locks never had a grand department store, but we had a very nice train station, and the trip to Hartford to go shopping at “G. Fox” was a treat. My mother and grandmother took me there once a year to get clothes for the new school year. Things were much different back in the 1940s than they are now. I remember that year after year, the same lady was there in the boy’s clothing department. My mother and grandmother always looked forward to having lunch in the store’s cafeteria or stopping at the Tea Room for a treat, before getting the train back to Windsor Locks. For about a century, folks from Windsor Locks made the pilgrimage to “G. Fox” in Hartford. This chapter is meant to capture a bit of the experience of shopping at G. Fox.

G. Fox & Co. was a large department store that originated in Hartford, Connecticut. The store was also the largest privately held department store in the nation when it was sold in 1965 to the May Department Stores Company. It was bought by the May Department Store company and operated in that capacity from 1965 to 1992. In 1992, the May company operated it as part of their “Filene’s” chain. In 2005, the May Company was merged with Federated Department Stores which converted it to a Macy’s.

G. Fox & Co. was established in 1847 by Gerson Fox and his brother, Isaac Fox, and was named “I. & G. Fox Co.” Their first store was a single-room storefront in Hartford. When Isaac sold his interest to his brother, Gerson renamed the company G. Fox and Company. Gerson's son, Moses, joined the business in 1863, and took over the store in 1880, upon Gerson's death. The early Fox store was famous for home delivery - by wheelbarrow. The store had grown to five floors when it burned to the ground in January 1917. Moses Fox, 66 at the time, announced that work would begin immediately on an eleven story replacement structure. The new flagship store was located at 960 Main Street in downtown Hartford. History has it that the original store and offices, destroyed by fire, were rebuilt because the store's customers rallied and paid approximately 95% of all outstanding bills - voluntarily. Encouraged by the response, Moses Fox had the new store designed by New York architect Cass Gilbert, as an 11-story behemoth, initially dubbed "Fox's folly" in reference to its sheer scale. The information in the last two paragraphs is from the Wikipedia website on G.Fox & Co. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G. Fox %26 Co.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._Fox_%26_Co.))

The following photo of the G. Fox building from before the 1917 fire is from the *Hartford Courant* (<http://www.courant.com/courant-250/moments-in-history/hc-classic-g-fox-co-ads-20140212-photogallery.html>)



G. Fox & Co. prior to the 1917 fire

The photo on the right is of the G. Fox & Co. building after it was rebuilt in 1918. It is from the Wikipedia webpage on G. Fox & Co. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G. Fox %26 Co.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._Fox_%26_Co.))



**G. Fox & Co., 960 Main St.,
Hartford, Connecticut (1918)**

The rest of the photos in this article are from the *Hartford Courant* webpage on the G.Fox & Co. (<http://www.courant.com/courant-250/moments-in-history/hc-classic-g-fox-co-ads-20140212-photogallery.html>)

Those who shopped at G. Fox remember the elevator operators who announced each floor and what was sold on that floor. Here is a photo of the elevator operators in 1945. The store included a post office, beauty salon, restaurants, and a tea room. In addition, G. Fox offered the assistance of personal shoppers and even provided interpreters for those more comfortable speaking other languages.



Elevator Operators at G. Fox & Co. Circa 1945

The following 1935 *Hartford Courant* ad for G. Fox give an idea of the styles and the prices at that time.

G. FOX & CO.

ESTABLISHED 1847

Other Fox News on Pages 4, 5, 6, Part II,

PHONE 2-5151



Deb Shop Crepes and Velveteens

Regularly \$12.75

\$10

They're from our young Deb Shop—but anyone who can wear sizes 11 to 17 will want to hop right into them! Simple little velveteens with militant ideas (we've sketched a honey) . . . crepe frocks with news in the way of details—all in such good fall colors as brown, rust, wine or green . . . all at this special price.

G. FOX & CO.—DEB SHOP—THIRD FLOOR

New FALL FROCKS and COSTUME SUITS



Velveteen dresses in Renaissance colors—like the one we've sketched with enormous gilt buttons and lame ascot. Wool dresses tailored with a swagger air. Sizes 12 to 20. Reg. \$12.75 and \$13.75.

\$10⁰⁰

Wool costume suits, street dresses of crepe or wool, afternoon dresses of velveteen or alpaca—all with definitely this-season details. Sizes 12 to 20. Reg. \$14.75 and \$19.75.

LISTEN TO FOX'S RADIO PROGRAM
OVER WTIC 7 A. M. TO 8 A. M.

EXTRA
VALUE



New Furred Coats

Special For Hartford Days

\$58

\$69.50 Value

We don't expect such values to tarry long! Sports or dress coats in new woadens . . . lavish with Beaver, Persian, Kolinsky, Badger, Hudson Seal or Cross Fox. Black, brown, green or oxford. Sizes 12 to 20, 26 to 44, 35 1/2 to 45 1/2.

SCOT-TEX TWEED COATS . . . smart, young and very practical for sports, school or business. A new, moisture-proof, knitted fabric in tan, brown, green, wine or oxford. Sizes 12 to 40. \$19.75 value.

\$15

G. FOX & CO.—COATS—THIRD FLOOR



Bright Swagger SUIT

Collared with Lynx

\$59.50 Value

\$48

For Hartford Days

Knockout Frocks

from the

BUDGET SHOP

At Hartford Days Savings

\$10.75 **\$8⁹⁵**
Values



1935 G. Fox & Co. Advertisement

Below is a \$30 wedding dress that G. Fox had for sale back in 1941.



\$30 G. Fox wedding dress. 1941

Here is a photo of G. Fox & Co. in the snow, probably during the 1950s. It brings back memories of Christmas shopping at the store back then.



G. Fox & Co. in the snow ~ 1950s

When making a purchase at G. Fox, back in the days before computers, pneumatic tubes were used to send money and paperwork from one place in the store to another.



Pneumatic Tube used for sending money and paperwork from one part of the store to another.

The reception room of the beauty salon at G. Fox evokes an earlier time.



Reception room of the beauty salon at G. Fox & Co.

The window displays were very important back in the heyday of the big department stores. They were very important to G. Fox.



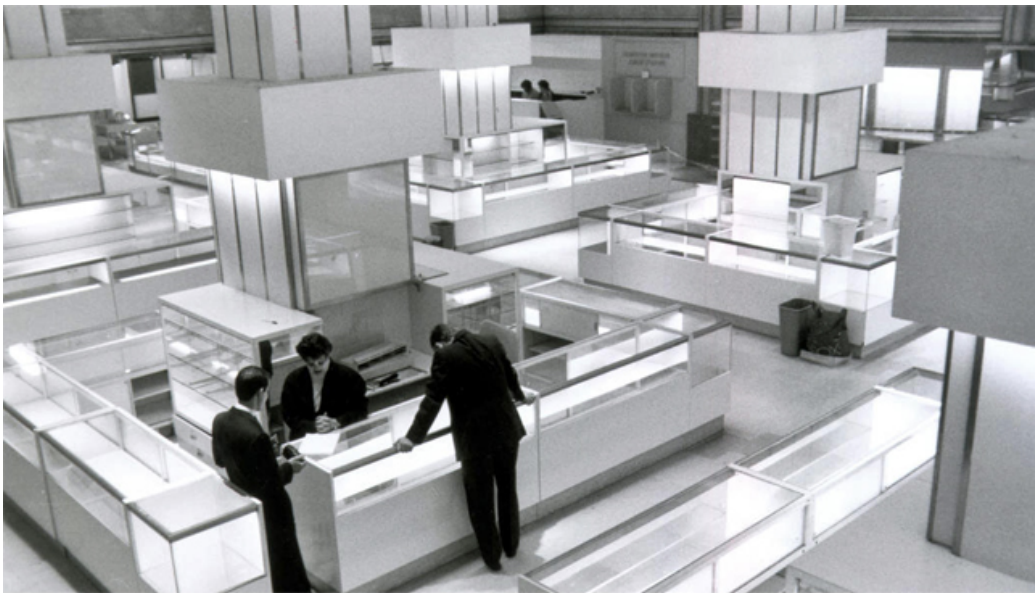
Window Display at G. Fox & Co.

The thing that most people will remember about G. Fox was the hustle and bustle of the main floor. See the following photo.



The Main Floor of G. Fox & Co.

The following photo shows the emptiness of the store on its final day. It was the end of a great era.



G. Fox & Co. on the last day of operation, 1993

Although it was not in Windsor Locks, G. Fox & Co. of Hartford, was important to the people of Windsor Locks for almost a century. The grand era of the big department stores is gone, and G. Fox & Co. is gone with it, but Windsor Locks residents who lived in that era will never forget that magnificent store.

Sources:

<http://www.courant.com/courant-250/moments-in-history/hc-classic-g-fox-co-ads-20140212-photogallery.html>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G. Fox %26 Co.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._Fox_%26_Co.)

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G. Fox %26 Co.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._Fox_%26_Co.)

<http://www.courant.com/courant-250/moments-in-history/hc-classic-g-fox-co-ads-20140212-photogallery.html>

Chapter 26

Johnny Menko: Windsor Locks' Most Prolific Musician

Any list of highly successful people from Windsor Locks would certainly include Johnny Menko. Johnny was the leader of a Polka band that lasted more than 70 years. He was not only the band's organizer and leader, he was a prolific songwriter, arranger and musician. He was elected to the International Polka Association's Hall of Fame in 1987. His band played all over Connecticut and Massachusetts, and amassed a fiercely loyal following over the decades.



Johnny Menko 1915-2009

Johnny was born in Windsor Locks on June 13, 1915. He grew up in Warehouse Point. He worked at in the quality control department of M. H. Rhodes, Inc. in Hartford. When he was only nine years old, he could play the violin along with records of Polish music on a record player. He attended Enfield High School, and then studied music at the University of Kansas. He switched to Bay Path Institute in Springfield, MA, where he majored in Business.

In 2006, there was a special event to celebrate the Johnny Menko band's 69 years existence. It was held in St. Joe's Polish Club in Colchester, CT. That night, at the age of 91, Johnny was asked when he would retire. His answer was: "I'm not going anywhere. I still want to play". (Olszewski, 2006)

Johnny originally formed his band in 1936 along with his brothers, Joe and Tony, and one of their neighbors, Ted Wezowic. It was called the "Menko-Wezowic Orchestra." The band achieved quick success in its performances in Connecticut and Massachusetts. In 1938, two more members were added, and the name was changed to the "Blue Bells Orchestra." The new members were Wasyl Szykula, the "Singing Carpenter from Windsor Locks," and Charlie Polisky. Wasyl stayed with the band for over 50 years.

In 1949, the band changed its name to "The Johnny Menko Orchestra - Hartford's Smartest Polka Band." It added two singers, Florence Krol and Irena (Krol) Menko, who were sisters. Ray Polisky and Bill Kantorski also joined the group at that time, and each stayed with the band for more than 50 years.

Florence dropped out of the band in 1950, and was replaced by Joe Menko's wife, Josephine, who was a sister of Florence and of Irena. She stayed with the group through its entire existence. In 1961, Bob Menko, who was the son of Joe and Josephine Menko, joined the band when he was 19 years old.

The band was known as a group of musicians who were good friends and who had a great relationship.

Johnny Menko and his orchestra had their own radio show from 1949 to 1955. It was sponsored by Balch Motor Sales of East Windsor, CT, and it aired from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on Sundays.

In 1951, the band broadcast from the Pine Meadow Restaurant in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, for 26 weeks on Wednesday evenings. Wasyl Szykula produced these shows.

Because of the interest of Polka musician and promoter, Chet Ososki, the orchestra started to record in 1950 for Karo Music Co. of Manchester. Two of their hits were "Our Special Polka" and "Fireside Polka." In 1955 and 1956, their first two long-playing records were released by Fiesta Record Co. of New York. Later they recorded on a number of other labels.

One favorite spot for the Johnny Menko Orchestra was the Cavalier Restaurant in Willimansett, MA, where the group played every Sunday afternoon from 1951 to 1953. These shows were broadcast directly from the stage. They were emceed by Andy Szuberla, who was called "the Polish Rhyming Announcer."

A very popular spot at which the orchestra played frequently was the Quonset Restaurant in Hadley, Massachusetts. Off and on, the orchestra had played there for over 30 years. In the 1970s, the orchestra returned to television, appearing a number of times on "Polka" over WHYN, Channel 40, in Springfield, MA, with Frank Knight as Master of Ceremonies.

They played in the Catskills, at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, at the Kielbasa Festival in Chicopee, MA, at Riverside Park in Springfield, MA, Mountain Park in Holyoke, MA, and at Lake Compounce in Bristol, CT. They also played at countless weddings, birthdays and anniversaries. They even played at one christening. The group went out of their way to gain wider

popularity with the younger crowd by playing modern music for school and sports dances and carnivals.

Johnny retired as leader of the orchestra on March 6, 1977, and his brother Joe, without missing a beat, took over the responsibilities of the band under the name of The Menko Orchestra. Johnny Menko continued playing in the Menko Orchestra which completed 50 years of musical entertainment on March 6, 1987. Johnny died on July 10, 2009, at the age of 94. He lived his life to the fullest. Like Frank Sinatra, "He did it his way."

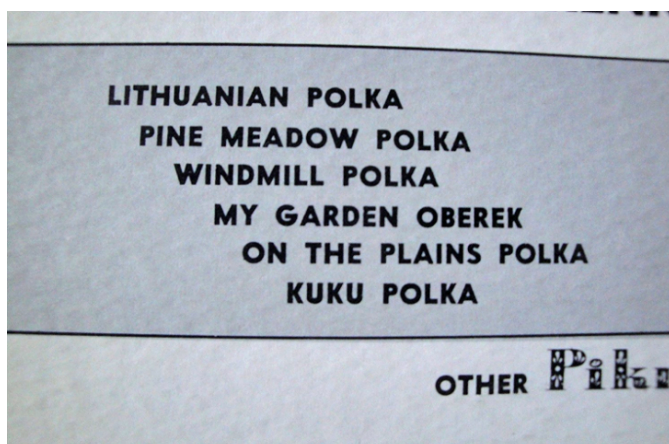
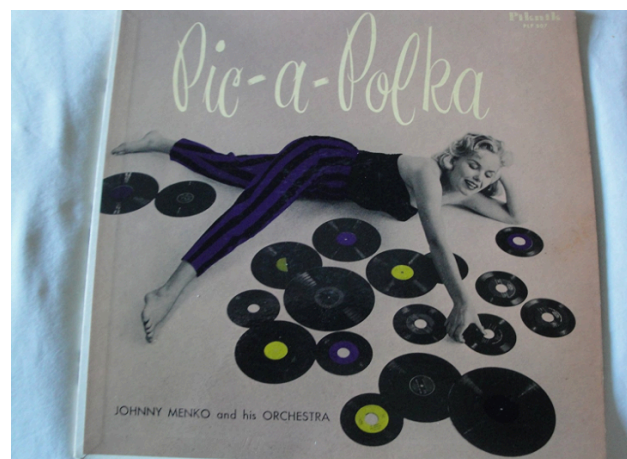
Here are some of his album covers and other photos:

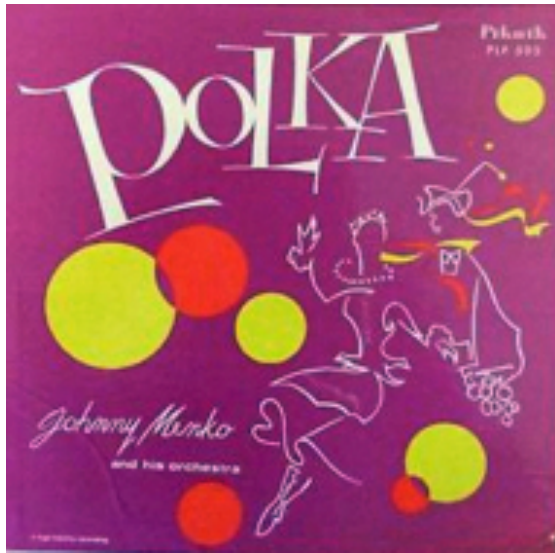


Wishing Well Oberek
(Johnny Menko)

Larry Chesky, Walt Solek, Ray Henry,
Happy Louie, Jimmy Sturr, Al Soyka,
Johnny Menko, and others

50 Polka Hits





Sources:

Olszewski, Karen, "The Menko's 69 Years in Polkas!", The Narkive Newsgroup Archive. <http://alt.music.polkas.narkive.com/WxBJdYPE/the-menkos-69-years-in-polkas>

Joseph Menko inducted into the International Polka Association's Hall of Fame, <http://www.ipapolkas.com/blog/otw-portfolio/johnny-menko-pioneer-category-inducted-1987/>

Obituary of Joseph Menko 1917-2013, <http://mulryanfh.com/tribute/details/205/Joseph-Menko/obituary.html>

Obituary of Joseph Menko in the *Hartford Courant* of <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/hartfordcourant/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&pid=129648004>

Chapter 27

Wasył Szykula: the Singing Carpenter

by Jack Redmond

Windsor Locks Journal, October 30, 1987

This article was one of Jack Redmond's "Cabbages and Kings" weekly columns in the *Windsor Locks Journal*. James Roche, who was responsible for putting the Windsor Locks Journal archives online, told me it is OK to use Jack Redmond's column on Wasył Szykula in this book. The following is Jack Redmond's column.

Wasył Szykula, the man with that wonderful smile, is a study in contrasts. Born in Windsor Locks, Wasył, at the age of five, traveled to Poland (land of his parents), staying until 1939, and then returning (at age 23) to his homeland.

The local builder of homes has led a double life, with an illustrious and active career as a singer (over four decades) with the well-known polka band of Johnny Menko, a Warehouse Point native and a member of the Polka Hall of Fame.

If there was a Hall of Fame for a man who has mastered four languages, has been an actor and singer, has earned his livelihood by building homes, has become a father of three and a grandfather of four, then Wasył Szykula would qualify on the first ballot.

Looking back over the past seventy or so years, Wasył admitted, what he was the most proud of was "being born in Windsor Locks".

Wasył would be the first one to agree, his story is "sort of" complicated and to be truly appreciated, must be told from the beginning.

Just for the record, Wasył lived on the corner of South Street and Main Street in his first five years. His parents, born in Austria, (Wasył was actually of Ukrainian descent) returned to their native land to find it was suddenly Poland, due to some decision after World War One.

Wasył attended school up to the fourth grade, which actually covered a six year period. He said, "We were taught Polish and also the Greek and Latin alphabet." (It must be noted, Wasył could only speak Polish, he had not known English as a boy growing up.)

His classmates knew he was born in America, and at times would tease him by calling him Wasył... "The American". But it never bothered him. He grew up playing the student games of their country, unlike the games played in America, such as baseball, football and basketball.

The Szykula family, with nine children, lived in a large village. At an early age, Wasyl, finished with school, was now expected to go out to work, and he did, on a farm for seventy cents a day. This was not for young Wasyl. He went into the rag business, where on a good day, he could make up to seven dollars. He tried several jobs, even selling eggs for one cent apiece. He worked in a store until he, like the rest of the people in the village, realized World War II was just around the corner.

Wasyl wanted to return to America. He was happy in Poland, but wished to return to his homeland. After many delays, due to problems in obtaining a birth certificate, which he finally received, mostly through the efforts of relatives in the states and St. Michael's Church in Hartford. He and his brother Peter, journeyed to Hamburg, Germany for an ocean ride to New York City. They made it on the ship ... "President Roosevelt."

Wasyl thinking back, "When I was only five, I left the states with my parents and went from good to bad." Now he was home in America, and for the better, he assumed. But it was a strange country, he was in his early twenties, and did not know the language.

He and his brother were fortunate to find living quarters with relatives on Whiton Street. Wasyl's first job was working on tobacco in Broad Brook. Wasyl was not a man to stand still, so he decided to try carpentry.

It turned out to be his life's work. He said, "I started as a beginner, with a construction company." During World War II, he worked at his trade for the New York/New Haven and Hartford Railroad on buildings and bridges around the state. Probably his bigger problem was learning to speak English. "It was tough," he said, but with his desire and willingness to learn, he soon became used to his native tongue.

After the war, Wasyl "wanted to be on his own." He did just that, going into the carpentry business, and gaining carpentry skills along the way, he build many homes in town. Wasyl is proud to day, "I built homes on Stevens, Roberts and John Streets and am the only Windsor Locks-born person who can say... I built the most houses in my hometown."

All of his brothers and sisters did not come to the states, but one of his five sisters (Mary) and two of his three brothers (Peter and Dmytro) did live in Windsor Locks. (They are now all deceased.)

In order to give the background of Wasyl's love of his life, we must go back to the early forties and a return to the tobacco fields, scene of his first job and also his future wife. It was there he met Helen Wlodkowski of New Britain, who grew up in Enfield. They were married in 1943, lived in Enfield and Hartford a short time, before moving to their present home on South Center Street. Helen and Wasyl have three children... Wasyl John, Steven Anthony and Patricia Ann Tiernan.

The younger Wasyl lives in Enfield with his wife, Gloria, and their two sons. Wasyl is employed by the Connecticut Light and Power. Local basketball fans,

will surely remember Steve Szykula, in the early 70s, breaking high school records on the court. It was the first time his father took an interest in sports, but once he saw his son in action, both Wasyl and Helen became true Raider fans and never missed a game. Today, it's Doctor Steven Szykula of Salt Lake City, Utah, where he lives with his wife Gail, their son and daughter. He has his own practice as a clinical psychologist. Steve attended the University of Hartford and received his doctorate at the University of Tennessee.

Patricia Ann Tiernan and her husband, Mike, live in town. They were recently married. Patricia, as her brothers before her, graduated from the local high school. She graduated from the U. of Hartford, received her Certified Public Accountant title and is employed at Stanadyne.

Additional talents, or the other side of Wasyl Szykula... from the hammer and nails to singing with a polka band, has been his own particular way to enjoy life. Wasyl who had been a young actor in Poland, before returning to the states, has been a vocalist since 1939, specializing in songs sung in three languages.... Polish, Russian and Ukrainian, all with the Johnny Menko band. Wasyl and Johnny have performed in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut for over forty years. During their heyday, performances were every weekend and he was given the name ... "The Singing Carpenter from Windsor Locks."



Wasyl Szykula & his wife Helen

Chapter 28

The RAM Hosiery Company



**The RAM Hosiery Co., 187 Turnpike Rd
Incorporated in 1951 by Richard A. Miner**

The RAM Hosiery Co. is a bit of a mystery. Those who lived in Windsor Locks in the 1950s remember the sign and the building at 187 Turnpike Road. There was a clothing display in the front window that never seemed to change. The word “Hosiery” in the name makes one think of “socks” but the term refers to all sorts of “leggings” or things worn on the leg, such as socks, stockings, leggings, tights, pantyhose, leg-warmers, etc. That would be a very limited set of wares for a small Windsor Locks shop to try to make a living at. However, as we shall see from advertisements that they put in the *Windsor Locks Journal*, they also sold shoes and clothing.

The “RAM” in the title refers to the initials of the owner: Richard A. Miner. He and his wife, Pauline, owned and ran the store.

Richard Miner was born in New Hampshire on Jul 28, 1916. His wife, Pauline, was also born in 1916. He enlisted in the Army in 1944, after doing three years in high school. His enlistment form said that his civilian occupation was that of a machinist. Richard and Pauline were married in 1947. This

information was gotten from a search on familysearch.org on the name "Richard A. Miner"

Their store was incorporated on June 25, 1951. They lived in the same building that housed their store.

<https://www.ctopendata.com/38618-ram-hosiery-company-the>

There were ads for the RAM Hosiery Co in the *Windsor Locks Journal* in the years 1952, 1953 and 1954. One of those ads is found below. The others were similar.

Below is a photo of his wife in their store, and a March 25, 1954 ad in the *Windsor Locks Journal* which shows that the store sells men's women's and children's clothing. The photo of Pauline in the store is from about 1956.



**Pauline Miner, in her store,
The RAM Hosiery Co.**

... R A M ' S ...
Men's And Boys' Clothing
Jackets Pants Shirts Sweaters Gloves
Socks Underwear Dungarees Shoes Rubbers
Notions Gifts Etc.
Children's Easter Dresses
Loomcraft, Carol Carter, Youth Time, Sun Anna, All Sizes



Shop At Ram's — The Suburban Variety Store
With Big City Values — Make A Dollar Really Holler
Open Every Evening Until 9.30
Prove To Yourself — That It's Always Worth The Trip
TO SHOP AT RAM'S
RAM HOSIERY COMPANY
Route 75—South Of Bradley Field Windsor Locks

Below is an advertising sign that was on the side of the road near the RAM Hosiery Co.



RAM Hosiery Co. sign on right side of road

Frank Baron was a Windsor Locks policeman and he used to patrol the area which included the RAM Hosiery Co. He sent me an email message with what he knew about the RAM Hosiery Co. Richard was about 5'10" tall. He spoke with a slight accent which stemmed from growing up in New Hampshire. The police used to patrol the parking lots in the neighborhood of his store, and they often engaged him in conversation.

The *Springfield Union's* April 2, 1962 edition had an article saying that Marine Pvt. Alfred R. Miner, son of Richard A Miner of Turnpike Road, has completed training at Paris Island.

When Mr. Miner saw Don Flynn running Bradley Air Parking, he also got into the airport parking business. Then the 1979 tornado did a great deal of damage in the area of his property, which extended to the Hamilton Standard Parking Lot. He sold his land to a hotel chain at that time. The DoubleTree Hotel is now on that property. Below is a photo of the RAM Parking office after the 1979 Tornado.



RAM Parking near Bradley Field after 1979 Tornado

Sources:

Much of the information and the photos for this chapter came from Frank Baron. The chapter could not have been written without him.

<https://www.ctopendata.com/38618-ram-hosiery-company-the>

An ad from the *Windsor Locks Journal* of March 25, 1954.

A familysearch.org search on the name "Richard A. Miner".

Springfield Union, April 2, 1962.

Chapter 29

Things That Have Changed In The Schools

Schools in 2019 are much different from they were thirty to fifty years ago. These changes are not unique to Windsor Locks. They are much the same across the United States. High schools rarely teach “shop” anymore, and “home ec” is much different than it used to be. Many of the differences are due to changing technologies. Some are strictly changes in style. Some are controversial, such as the frequent changes in “new math” which has students using approaches to math that their parents have never seen. This chapter is not a complete listing of these changes, but rather a photographic overview of some of the changes. The changes are fun to remember.

Learning Cursive Writing

Cursive writing is nearly as controversial as prayer at school. In the middle of the last century, cursive writing was a necessary. Maybe it was the introduction of the computer that changed this. Back then, the teacher would closely check how you held the pencil. The cursive letters, both upper and lower case, were prominently displayed on the walls of some grades. It wasn't anyone's favorite subject, but it is the way most adults wrote. Today, it is frustrating for those of us who learned cursive writing in the schools, to see how kids hold their pencils. Is cursive completely gone? It is not. Virtually all crafts shows still have a number of people displaying their skills at calligraphy. It is an art form.



Learning How to Tell Time on an Analog Clock

With the rise of computer electronics came digital watches and clocks. However before such devices, one had no option. You needed to be able to read an analog clock. It was an absolute necessity, like being able to tie your shoe laces. While our parents taught this at home, learning to tell time on an analog clock was also taught in the schools.



Library “Due Date ” Stamps

Whenever you took a book out of the school library or the public library, there was a card in an envelope on the back of every book which had the date at which the book had to be returned to the library. You feared returning a book that was past its “due date”. You could tell how popular a book was by the card with the due dates on it. Libraries still have due dates, but it has now all been computerized. Bar codes changed things, but they needed computers to read them.



The Card Catalog

When you wanted to look up a subject or an author, you went to the Card Catalog, which was a big wooden set of drawers, holding cards with relevant information. You had to learn how to use the “Dewey Decimal System” to find what was available. Generally, everyone in your class had the same assignment and the same deadline, so you had get to the Card Catalog quickly and know how to use it, if you wanted to get your project done on time. The whole thing was a daunting process.

Like the other things that we have already reviewed, this whole system has now been computerized, and the computer systems are much easier to use. Also, much of what is available, is available "on-line," so everybody can find and use documents at the same time. Life is much better now in that regard. Of course, the teachers now have computer programs that can analyze your writeup to determine if it was copied from other documents which are online.



Brown Paper Bag Lunch

Before the days of rectangular metal lunch boxes, which also contained a thermos, kids often brought their lunch to school in a brown paper bag. Those are still seen in schools, but rarely. Now we have very nice, very fancy, and somewhat expensive, lunch bags, which fit into or onto backpacks. It is trite but true, that things were simpler in the “old days”.



The above photo seems to indicate that hairstyles have changed too.

School Book Covers

When books were passed out in the first days of school each year, we often were forced to make book covers for them out of the brown bags that you got at the grocery store, or out of brown craft paper. The books were often old and well used, and the school had no plans to replace them. We were pressured to take good care of them. We didn't make written notes in the book or fold the ends of the pages.



Identical Gym Uniforms

While some schools still have gym uniforms, the old style of baggy, high-waisted uniforms of the 1900s have gone forever.



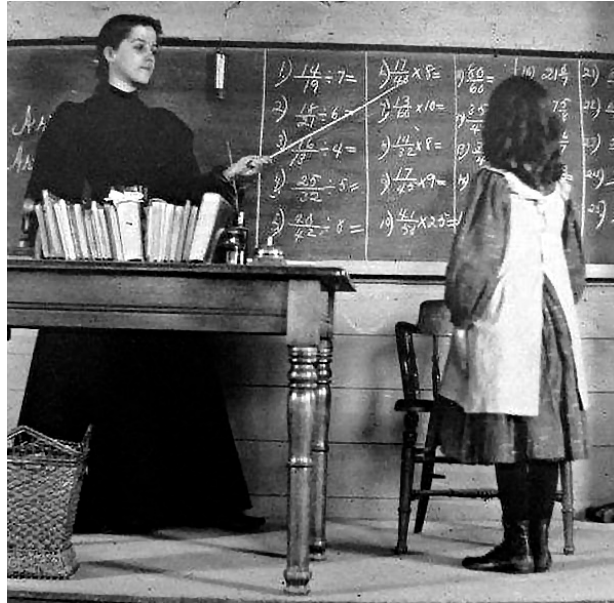
The Weekly Reader

Those of us of a certain age remember the Weekly Reader well. It was published weekly from about 1929 to 2012. It was written for elementary school students and had articles about new inventions, new children's books, science, animals, nature, etc. It was a newspaper for kids. The world of newspapers is changing. Readership is going down for adults in the US. Many of us were reading the Weekly Reader before television was invented, and long before computers became household items. Now, the Weekly Reader is gone.



Chalkboards

Doing math on dusty old blackboards is a thing of the past. Most schools now use marker boards or electronic boards. We don't have to "clap" the erasers anymore.



Going Crazy at Recess

Back in old days, we would have old wooden or metal structures in the schoolyard for recess. We would spin and swing as far as we could, and we survived. Things are a bit more controlled now.



Morning Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance

Morning prayer was universal in Catholic schools, but existed in public schools too. Back then, if something was a custom in the schools, there was little chance that kids or their parents would complain. Your heart may not have been in it, but you usually went along quietly. In many classrooms, the morning prayer was the start of the school day, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.



Girls Learning Baton Twirling

Back in the middle of the 1900s, school bands usually had a group of baton twirlers. They were all girls. Windsor Locks' drum corps of that time also had twirlers. Back then, "twirling" was a big thing. Why? Possibly because there were fewer alternatives for girls then than there are now. Baton twirling has drastically declined in popularity, but it still exists. The following photo should bring back memories.



Conclusion

Hopefully the discussion of some of the obvious changes in school life from the middle of the 1900s to the current time (2018) have both brought out some enjoyable memories. A little nostalgia, once in a while, is a good thing.

Attitudes of parents have changed. In the last century, if a teacher sent a note home or called home about your child, the parent's first reaction was to assume the school was right, and your child did something wrong. Now, some parents are quick to give a teacher a hard time. An alternative approach for parents is to try to volunteer at the school. Of course, with two working parents, this is often impossible.

Sources:

This article was adapted from ideas on the following two websites:

<https://dustyoldthing.com/not-in-schools-anymore/>

<http://oldphotoarchive.com/stories/historic-school-photos-good-old-days>

Doing a Google search on "How things have changed in the schools" will quickly generate a long list of websites on the topic

Chapter 30

North Street Market

An article on “Bert’s Market” can be found in *Windsor Locks History* (Montemerlo, 2017). Bert Nussbaum owned and operated “Bert’s Market,” which was formerly called the North Street Market. He operated his market from 1947 to 1972. This is the story of the North Street Market before it was acquired by Bert Nussbaum.

This article was motivated by a message that I received from Steve Wawruck. It was about his family’s involvement in the North Street Market. He said:

“I recently asked my uncle, Ray Mobiglia, about the North Street Market, which was a forerunner of Bert’s.

He told me that the North Street Market was a brainchild of his brother, (my uncle) Francis Mobiglia, who ran the St Mary Co-op. They rented the market space on North St from my grandmother’s sister, Katherine (Balboni) Tassinari, who owned the NorthStreet/Suffield Street corner lot which had the Market building on North St and the two-family house on Suffield St.

Francis got his father, (my Grandfather) Attilio Mobiglia, and brother, Raymond, to form a partnership. Raymond told me that Jim Wheeler, who married Ray and Francis’ sister, Loretta, painted the original “North St. Market” sign. They fixed up the inside of the first floor with shelving, coolers and a meat display.

Uncle Ray was the butcher. Uncle Joe Balboni became a partner, and the store was known for a short time as “The Balboni-Mobiglia Market”. There were some disagreements among the partners. Ray left first. Then Francis and my grandfather, Attilio, also left. Uncle Joe ran it for a while as the “Balboni Market”. Eventually it was sold to the Nussbaums, and it became Bert’s Market.

In about 1972, Aunt Katherine sold the Market building to Joe Marinone, who didn’t renew Bert’s lease, along with the corner house on Suffield St. My family lived there from 1957 to 1974. Joe Marinone had to keep a business open on the property. If he didn’t, it would revert back to a “residential” property. To do that, he had my Dad (who was disabled) sell bread and milk for a couple hours each day to satisfy the

zoning regulations until he remodeled the building to become a professional center which housed a dentist, Dr. Garry, and a Certified Public Accountant, Lou McGhee, and a travel agency.”

Steve Wawruck’s account of his family’s North Street Market is just what it takes to get a historian’s juices flowing, and to track down the rest of the story. A search of the Springfield newspapers turned up a 1938 article about the North Street Market, and a search of the *Windsor Locks Journal* archives turned up more than 40 advertisements and articles which ranged from 1935 to 1965. They provide dates of transitions of the ownership of the store and insights into what the store sold over those three decades.

The earliest of those newspaper entries was an advertisement in the June 28, 1935 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal*. While it does not say who the proprietor is, it does provide an assortment of the “specials” at the time. Kellogg’s Corn Flakes were seven cents a box. Hamburg was 19 cents a pound. Of course, these were the days when the big Stock Market crash was weighing heavily on the people. We see the address of the North Street Market is 12 North Street.

In the Dec. 31, 1937 ad in the *Windsor Locks Journal*, the proprietor of the North Street Market is given as Alfred Liberman, and the telephone number is 660.

Happy New Year!

*
Three little words, sincere and true, being our most sincere good wishes to all of our friends and patrons in greeting 1938. They are, “Happy New Year.” May the new year unfold health, happiness and prosperity for all. We thank all for the loyal patronage during the past year.

North Street Market

ALFRED LIBERMAN, Proprietor
North Street . . . Telephone 660 . . . Windsor Locks

Windsor Locks Journal Dec. 31, 1937

Call and See the New...

NORTH STREET MARKET

12 North Street
Windsor Locks, Conn.

Saturday Specials

Boneless Pot Roast...	25c-29c	lb
Boneless Oven Roast.....	35c	lb
Rib Roast Beef.....	29c	lb
Sirloin Steak	45c	lb
Short Steak	45c	lb
Round Steak	40c	lb
Shoulder Steak	29c	lb
Fancy Fowl	25c	lb
Fresh Hamburg	19c	lb
Small Shoulders	23c	lb
Country Roll Butter.....	26c	lb
Kellogg's Corn Flakes ...	7c	pkg
Sanitary Silk Tissue...6	rolls	25c
Dill Pickles, quart jar.....	17c	
Sweet Mixed Pickles...qt	jar	19c
Cocoa	2 lb box	17c
Confectionery Sugar	7c	pkg
Cigarettes	2 pkgs	25c
Dandy Cup Coffee.....	19c	lb
Bananas	4 lbs	18c
Oranges, Large.....	25c	doz
Cabbage.....	2c	lb
Beets.....	3 bunches	10c
Lemons	25c	doz

**Windsor Locks Journal
June 28, 1935**

In the *Springfield Republican* issue of July 13, 1938, there was a notice of an auction to sell the contents of the North Street Market. Unfortunately there is no information as to who the owner of the North Street Market is. Interestingly, there is no mention of the sale in the *Windsor Locks Journal*.

A U C T I O N S A L E

**The Entire Stock of GROCERIES of NORTH STREET MARKET
WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.
AT PUBLIC AUCTION IN TRADE LOTS:
WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 1938, AT 1.30 P. M.
at 838 MAIN ST., SPRINGFIELD, MASS.
(Corner Margaret Street)**

**STOCK CONSISTS OF: Tea, Coffee, Cocoa, Sugar, Flour, Soaps, Soap
Powders, Cereals, Fruits, Peas, Corn, Tomatoes, Jam, Jelly, Soups, Baking
Powder, Spinach, Salmon, Tuna, Pickles, Spices, Olive Oil, Prunes, Raisins,
Jars, Matches, Lye, Hand Soap, Brooms, Mopsticks, Clothesline, Paper Bags,
Parchment Paper, Cookies, Crackers, Soda and hundreds of more items.
Also a large lot of restaurant dishes. This is a very large, clean stock of
staple Groceries and Canned Goods of the best brands.**

**HENRY BINSKY, AUCTIONEER
838 Main St., Springfield, Mass. Tel. 7-0357**

Springfield Republican, July 13, 1938

The October 22, 1942 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* (see below) starts off as the story of a Mr. Michael DiAngelo, the proprietor of the North Street Market. The end of the article says that the North Street Market was formerly owned by Samuel Fisher of Hartford, but he died a few years ago, and the new owner is Michael DiAngelo, who lives in Thompsonville. So it is probable that the Alfred Liberman, who was listed as the Proprietor in the Dec. 31, 1937 advertisement, worked for Samuel Fisher.

The April 27, 1944 ad in the *Windsor Locks Journal* (see below) shows that Mr. DiAngelo is still the Proprietor of the North Street Market. However there were no more advertisements in the *Windsor Locks Journal* for the North Street Market until Dec. 28, 1948. (see below). At that time, the proprietors are "Joe Balboni and Mobiglia". This tells us that Steve Wawruck's family assumed ownership of the North Street Market sometime between 1944 and 1948.

The December 15, 1949 ad in the *Windsor Locks Journal* still showed "Balboni and Mobiglia" as the proprietors. However, the Dec. 27, 1951 article showed Joseph T. Balboni as the proprietor. Joe Balboni is still listed as the proprietor in the Oct. 15, 1953 ad.

North Street Merchant Robbed In Suffield

**Hold-up Men Hide In Rear Of
Car Driven By Storekeeper
En Route To His Home. Take
Money And Car, Leaving The
Owner Stranded In Rain**

Michael DiAngelo of Thompsonville, proprietor of a grocery store and Market in the Katz building on North street in this town, was held up and robbed of about \$300 late last night in Suffield, while on his way home after closing his place of business.

After leaving here about 11 o'clock last night, he drove his car to Suffield on the way to Thompsonville, and in the vicinity of Mile Hill was pounced upon by two men who were hiding in the rear part of his car, unknown to Mr. DiAngelo. He was forced from the car and his money and other personal belongings were taken from him and the two hold-up men drove off in the automo-

money and other personal belongings were taken from him and the two hold-up men drove off in the automobile.

It was necessary for Mr. DiAngelo to walk about two miles to the center of Suffield, where he notified the police of the hold-up, and later in the evening the abandoned car was found alongside the highway in the vicinity of the Suffield-Thompsonville bridge. A good description of the thugs was given the police by Mr. DiAngelo, and Suffield police, assisted by state police officers from the Hartford barracks, are conducting an investigation.

The **North Street Market** was formerly conducted by Samuel Fisher of Hartford, and following his death several years ago, the place was taken over by Mr. DiAngelo, who has operated it since. He drives back and forth from his home in Thompsonville daily.

Victory

**Windsor Locks Journal
October 22, 1942**

NORTH STREET MARKET

23 North Street, Windsor Locks

M. DeANGELO, Propr.

We now have a quantity of Quality Cold Cuts including—
 Bologna Salami Pressed Ham Boiled Ham
 Frankfurts and Liverwurst

Also Selected Groceries, Ice Cream, Soda, Cigars, Cigarettes

Planting Time Is Here—With arrival of the Spring season,
 it is time to give some thought to planting the Family
 Garden. Don't forget we have all kinds of Selected
 Seeds for the Home Garden or Farm.

— PHONE WINDSOR LOCKS 744 —

Windsor Locks Journal, April 27, 1944

North Street Market

Meats -- Groceries -- Vegetables -- Fish

Joe Balboni & Mobiglia, Proprs.

FREE DELIVERY

Holiday Specials!

Swifts's Young Hen TURKEYS	85c lb.
Roasting Chicken, 4 to 6-lb. average	65c lb.
Pork Loins, rib end	55c lb.
Fresh Shoulders, lean	45c lb.
Steaks, -- Sirloin and Shorts	83c lb.
Italian Sausage, Home-made	75c lb.
Nuts-- Almonds, Mixed Nuts, English	49c lb.
Chocolates, 5 lb. box	\$2.79
Figs, Calmyrna, 6 oz. package	17c
Sweet Life Cranberry Sauce, 2 cans	33c
Cremo Oleo,	37c lb.

Windsor Locks Journal, Dec. 23, 1948

FREE PARKING

NORTH STREET MARKET

JOSEPH BALBONI, Propr.

WINDSOR LOCKS

HAMBURG 49c lb.	PURE LARD 19c lb.
BRISKET CORNED BEEF 79c lb.	SELF SERVICE WRAPPED BACON 79c lb.
FRESH PIGS FEET 18c lb.	FRESH PIGS LIVER 35c lb.
FRESH LAMB STEW 25c lb.	Handy's Brightwood LINK SAUSAGE 69c lb.

Home-made ITALIAN Sausage 79c lb.

FREE DELIVERY

DAILY CALL 2-3641

Windsor Locks Journal, Oct 15, 1953

The next change in ownership shows up in the December 31, 1965 *Windsor Locks Journal* advertisement for the North Street Market, which shows the proprietor as Bert Nussbaum. Later it was called Bert's Market. Bert operated his market until 1972, when his lease on the building was up. In about 1972, Katherine (Balboni) Tassinari sold the building to Joe Marinone, who didn't renew Bert's lease.



Windsor Locks Journal, Dec 23, 1965

CONCLUSION

The article in *Windsor Locks History*, described the market when under the ownership of Bert Nussbaum. The history of the North Street Market, which became Bert's Market, is described in this article. Except for the initial owner, ownership of the North Street Market was in the family of Steve Wawruck's family. It was a message from Mr. Wawruck which led to the research for this article. The North Street Market / Bert's Market was one of the longest standing small businesses in the town of Windsor Locks. Following the changes in ownership by means of newspaper advertisements yielded insights into the costs of various meats and other foods from 1935 to 1972.

Sources:

This article could not have been written without the help of Steve Wawruck, who provided the initial information, and whose uncle, Ray Mobiglia, reviewed the final draft for accuracy.

"Bert's Market," *Windsor Locks History*, Mel Montemerlo, self published, Bel Air, MD. 2017.

Private letter from Steve Wawruck, October 1918.

A number of excerpts from the Windsor Locks Journal and the *Springfield Republican* newspapers were used. The date of issue of each is noted alongside the excerpts.

Raymond Mobiglia, who was one of the owners of the Oak Street Market reviewed a draft of the chapter for accuracy.

Chapter 31

Harry Brusie: Successful Athlete/Businessman

Harry Brusie could well be Windsor Locks' most accomplished athlete, and a successful businessmen. Only a sports commentator would take on the challenge of answering the question: "Who was the greatest athlete?" There is no objective way of answering such a question. However, no one would doubt that Harry Brusie was one of the best athletes who ever lived in Windsor Locks, or that he was an excellent businessman. His athletic endeavor, harness racing, was his business, along with the hotel business.

Unfortunately, as of this writing (2019), it is doubtful that more than a handful of Windsor Locks citizens have ever heard of him. Most of his accomplishments were in the 1895-1935 timeframe. The purpose of this chapter is to increase his visibility to townspeople.



Harry Brusie driving "Corporal Lee"

Harry Brusie was not born in Windsor Locks. He moved his family here in 1916, when he leased the Hotel Byrnes, which was previously known as the Charter Oak Hotel, and later known as the Windsor Locks Hotel and Coly's Hotel. It is the hotel that was on Main Street, across from the railroad station from 1861 to 1972.

Harry was born in 1876 in Egremont, MA to Lymon and Frances Brusie. He had three brothers, Fred, Aloin and Merrick, and one sister, Katie. That information is from the 1880 census. Harry was 7 years old at that time. How famous was he when he died in 1941? His obituary was in 253 newspapers in 23 states. Can any other person from Windsor Locks make that claim?

The information about Harry Brusie in this chapter came from reviewing newspaper archives. Luckily there are single internet websites that allow you to search most of the major newspapers of the United States at one time. That was very helpful. The *Windsor Locks Journal* had 17 articles that mentioned his name from 1898 until his death in 1941. The *Hartford Courant* had 58 references to Mr. Brusie from 1901 to 1922. Almost all of these related to his prowess as a sulky driver. The number of references to him in the *Windsor Locks Journal* do not compare with the number of references to Dr. Carniglia or to Governor Grasso, but the coverage of Mr. Brusie was nationwide. Virtually everyone in the nation who followed sulky racing in the 1900 - 1940 must have known of Harry Brusie, even though his races were in the Northeast.



Harry Brusie

Nothing could be found on Harry's life as a child. The first newspaper article that mentioned his name was 1898 article in the *Windsor Locks Journal* that gave the results in a horse race. Given that he was born in 1876, he was 22 when 1898 race was run.

The *Windsor Locks Journal* of Dec. 8, 1916, said that Mr. John J. Byrnes, owner of the hotel on Main Street, leased his hotel to Mr. Harry Brusie, along with all of its furnishings and equipment, and the cafe connected with the hotel. My Byrnes was in the middle of remodeling the hotel which had 32 rooms. He also added three shops to bottom floor of the hotel.

Mr. Brusie changed the name of the hotel from the Hotel Byrnes to the Hotel Brusie. Below is an advertising card from the hotel at that time.



The *Windsor Locks Journal* of May 8, 1917, said that Mr. Byrnes sold the Hotel that he had been leasing to Mr. Brusie, to Mr. Vito Colapietro. Mr. Brusie would continue his lease on the saloon in the hotel, and Mr. Byrnes would continue his lease on the Central Cafe in the hotel.

Mr. Brusie combined his lease of the hotel with his horse racing business. The January 26, 1917 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* had an article on a Road Drivers Club of Hartford, which was going to hold a dinner at the hotel for more than 100 people, many of whom were his horse racing friends and associates.

The *Windsor Locks Journal* issue of May 8, 1917 said that Mr. Brusie had unwittingly staged another kind of race. He had been keeping three pigs in a pen behind the hotel. Somehow they escaped. The townspeople had a great time trying to catch the pigs, or just watching others try to catch the pigs.

The *Windsor Locks Journal* of June 9, 1918 said that Mr. Brusie was a popular driver of trotting horses throughout the East, and made a grand showing during the past weekend. He won eleven first-places, which gave him a total of 25 for the season. He didn't drive in all of the races, He had other drivers, including his son, Lymon.

The *Boston Herald* of August 22, 1921 said that Mr. Brusie had won \$8,369 on the Bay State Circuit that year. In 2019 dollars, that would be the equivalent of \$105,000.

The Nov. 24, 1922 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* showed that Mr. Brusie was selling racehorses, and was using the hotel address to do so. Mr. Brusie remained in Windsor Locks until 1926. He lived in town for about nine years.

The *Boston Herald* of July 27, 1925 said that Brusie was the fourth leading money winner, with winnings of \$7,307, which in 2019 dollars is \$105,000 in 2019 dollars. Mr. Brusie was continuing to make a very good living. These numbers do not include his earnings from the hotel.



Harry got other members of his family into racing trotters. A 1933 photo of Harry and his son, Lymon, is shown above. They often competed in the same races. Harry's brother, Fred Brusie, was also into racing. Like Harry, he was also into the hotel business. He and his wife ran the Elm Tree Inn in his hometown of Egremont, MA. Fred was in racing with his brother, Harry and nephew, Lymon. However, due to poor health, he returned home to Egremont, where he died on June 12, 1932. (*Springfield Republican* of June 12, 1932)

The *Windsor Locks Journal* issue of June 14, 1941 had the obituary for Harry Brusie. Harry died in Boston after a long illness. It described Harry's interest in the hotel on Main Street, and said that Harry was well known throughout the country as a harness racing driver. It said that several years ago, Harry switched to become a trainer of trotters when running tracks became popular in the East. He was one of the most popular drivers at the old Charter Oak Park track in Hartford, and also at Sage Park in Windsor. The *Windsor Locks Journal* said that he was one of the finest drivers in the country, and that during the 1929 season, he won the country win/race record with fifty-one races to his stable's credit. The funeral was in East Hartford, and that is where he was buried.

The Harness Racing Hall of Fame elected him to the status of "Immortal" in 1978. The inscription reads: "He trained and raced around New England

for forty years. He developed many good half-mile horses, including Minor Hal, Quite Sure and Sturdy. Brusie was much loved by sportsmen because of his native wit and personality. His son, Lyman joined him at the stable for some time but then resigned to go with the thoroughbreds.”

<https://harnessmuseum.com/content/harry-brusie>

The book, *The History of Harness Racing in New England*, by Robert Temple, 2010, said the following: “For more than 40 years, Harry Brusie (1876-19410 who was born in Egremont, Mass, developed, trained and drove some of New England’s finest horses both on the old Bay State Circuit and throughout New England. Amongst his best were Sturdy, who set a world record for two-year-old trotting colts (2.06 1/2), Quite Sure, Minor Hal, and Tippie Volo, a brown filly who gained national notoriety by winning 13 straight races.”

Conclusion

Harry Brusie, was not a native of Windsor Locks. He moved there with his family, and leased the Hotel Byrnes on Main Street, changing the hotel’s name to “The Hotel Brusie”. He and his family lived in town for about nine years. Long before he moved to Windsor Locks, he had become a top notch harness racer. He continued that while in Windsor Locks, and also got into the business of buying and selling horses there.

His 40 year career in racing lasted from about 1895 to about 1935. He moved from racing to training trotters in the last part of his career. One of his brothers and two of his sons joined him in his racing endeavors.

He was one of the most prolific and most successful sulky drivers of his time, and he was known nationwide. He was given the rank of “Immortal” by the Harness Racing Hall of Fame. He had a horse that won 13 straight races. He was making the equivalent of \$100,000 (in 2019 dollars) during his career, and that didn’t include what he was making from the hotel.

As of this writing (2019) the average length of a professional basketball player’s career is about ten years, and for a professional football player. It is less than four years. Harry’s was about 40 years. It would be difficult to find other athletes who have reached an active professional career of 40 years. Interestingly, he also controlled his own career for those four decades. It is rare to find any professional athlete who controls their own career. Most are on teams that have coaches, and can be fired or traded at any moment.

When “ranking” athletes, one would have to rank Harry Brusie very high. He was into sulky racing from his teen years until not long before his death, although he did switch from racing to training horses his the last years

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Harness Racing Hall of Fame
<https://harnessmuseum.com/content/harry-brusie>

Numerous newspaper articles were referenced above, and the specific date of each article was given.

1880 U.S. Census

Chapter 32

Swede's Jewelers

Swede's Jewelers, a well-known shop that graced Main Street during its Golden Years, is the only one of those businesses that is alive and well in 2019, long after the others ceased to exist. Marconi Brothers Luncheonette moved to Suffield for a while. The Sasali brother's "Donut Kettle" moved to another location in Windsor Locks for a while. Swede's Jewelers moved to Geissler's Plaza in Warehouse Point, just a few miles away, and continued in business, almost as if nothing had happened. The Main Street Redevelopment project wiped out a mile long strip of retail businesses, EXCEPT FOR ONE! This is the story of Swede's Jewelers.

Some well known Windsor Locks businesses either started or were greatly enhanced by men returning home from World War II. The Charles Ten Restaurant, Roncari Brothers Construction and Swede's Jewelers are three of them.

The Swede's Jewelers shop, at 190 Main Street, was hard to miss. It was between the Rialto Theater and Sid's Modern Drug Store. It was the place you went to get graduation presents, wedding rings, gifts for special people on special occasions. The folks who ran the store and worked there didn't change over much over the decades. They were, for the most part, family.



Swede's Jewelers, 190 Main St.

Stanley A. Szwed was born on Dec 23, 1919, in Enfield, the son of Anthony and Mary Julia (Bak) Szwed. He attended Hartford Trade School and then enlisted in the Marine Corps. He used the Americanization of his name, Swede, for his business name. He used the technical knowledge he got in the military to open his own watch repair business. He had been a Marine Corps aviation technician. Stan founded the company in 1946 after coming home from World War II. Specializing in watch repair, he was soon selling timepieces to soldiers who lived in the barracks near Bradley Field. With bigger dreams of a full-fledged jewelry store, he opened a tiny shop on Main Street in Windsor Locks. The business moved to a different building on Main Street as the business grew. Soon, with the help of his wife, Alice, he also began selling jewelry.

Stan and his wife had eight children who worked in the store. Below is the first of many ads for Swede's Jewelers in the Windsor Locks Journal. We will learn more about how the store evolved from later ads in that newspaper.

ANNOUNCEMENT

SWEDE'S JEWELRY

190 Main St. Opposite Railroad Station Windsor Locks

Waltham Wrist Watches for Ladies and Gents, Necklaces,
Bracelets, Costume Jewelry, Fountain Pen Sets, Compacts,
Locketts and Numerous Other Items.

WATCH REPAIRING—Guaranteed Prompt Service

Estimates Gladly Furnished

Owned and Operated By

STANLEY SZWED

Marine Corp Veteran

Windsor Locks Journal 04 02 1947

Below are two more ads from the *Windsor Locks Journal*. The one on the left was from Feb. 18, 1949, and the one on the right is from May 8, 1952. Notice how the inventory carried by the store has expanded greatly.

Swede's Jewelers

BUY NOW!

A Small Deposit Marks Your Christmas Gift Reserved

KEEPSAKE DIAMOMDS

WATCHES

BULOVA ELGIN HAMILTON
LONGINES LeCOULTRE WITTNAUER
WALTHAM WESTCLOX BENRUS

CHILDREN'S WATCHES

Mary Marvel Mickey Mouse
Babe Ruth Gene Autry

CLOCKS

Big Ben G. E. LeCoultre Westclox
Phinney Walker Sessions Seth Thomas

STERLING

INTERNATIONAL ROGERS

SILVERWARE

Community Holmes and Edwards 1847 Rogers

PEN AND PENCIL SETS

PARKER SHEAFFER EVERSHARP

LIGHTERS

Ronson Evans A. S. P.
Elgin American Zippa

SHAVERS

SUNBEAM SCHICK REMINGTON

SUNBEAM APPLIANCES

Toaster Mixmaster Coffeemaster

Swede's Jewelers

190 MAIN ST. Opp. R. R. Station WINDSOR LOCKS

Windsor Locks Journal 02 18 1949

Swede's Jewelers

Anniversary Sale

Mother's Day SUNDAY **Buy Now For Graduation**

TOASTERS MIXERS GRILLS

IRONS AUTOMATIC PERCOLATORS

Special! **Telechron**

GE Steam Iron SUNBEAM Clocks
Reg. \$18.95 G. E. Reg. \$9.50
20% Discount UNIVERSAL Now \$5.95
 PROCTOR Plus Tax
 WESTINGHOUSE
See Our Ad REVERE WARE See Our Ad
On Page 5 ARVIN On Page 5

20-in. GE TELEVISION

LAY-A-WAY Reg. \$316.95 PAY WEEKLY

For Now \$279.00 AT

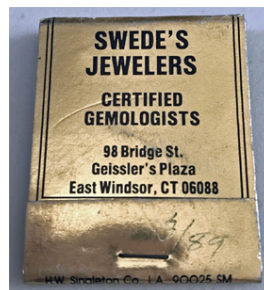
FATHER'S DAY Inc. Tax and Warr. No Extra Charge

Swede's Jewelers

Rialto Theatre Bldg. Windsor Locks

Windsor Locks Journal 05 08 1952

In 1947, they only carried jewelry and watches. By 1949, they added clocks, sterling silver, silverware, pen and pencil sets, lighters, shavers and Sunbeam appliances. By 1952, they added more electrical appliances, grills and television sets. Below is a matchbook cover with an ad for Swedes Jewelers.



Swede's Jewelers opened a second store on Main Street in Thompsonville. In August 1955, Thompsonville was hit hard by Hurricane Diane and the downtown flooded badly. Swede's Jewelers was next door to Ye Town Tavern. Below is a photo of those two stores during the flood.



Main St., Thompsonville flood of 1955

The Windsor Locks store continued to do well. Then in the mid 1960s, the town decided to engage in urban renewal. The project was called Main Street Redevelopment. The town got federal funding that was for rebuilding blighted areas in cities. The plan was to buy up all of the businesses and buildings in the business section of Main Street. They were all on the West side of the street (away from the canal). Swede's Jewelers was one of those businesses.

On the next page is a photo of Swede's and the surrounding stores, after they had been bought by the town, and were about to be torn down for urban renewal. The stores were torn down, but businesses didn't move in to replace those stores, as promised. Swede's Jewelers, Marconi Brothers Luncheonette and the Donut Kettle moved to other locations. Swede's Jewelers moved to Geissler's Plaza in Warehouse Point.

Before the move, Swede's Jewelers had an inventory sale. The May 30, 1974 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* carried a very large ad for the store which began with the following words:

"Our building must come down due to the Windsor Locks Redevelopment Program. In order to avoid moving our inventory and fixtures to our new location at Geissler's Plaza in Warehouse Point we are offering you, our customers, our entire inventory at ridiculous savings at this time of high and

rising prices. This is our way of saying thank you for the past 28 years of patronage.”

Below is a photo of Swede’s Jewelers in late 1974, just before all of the stores along Main Street were demolished.



Swede’s Jewelers, ~1974, when the stores closed for Main Street.Redevlopment

Soon after that, Swede’s Jewelers opened up in Geissler’s Plaza in Warehouse Point. The store, its design and fixtures, and the jewelry repair tools were modern and up to date. It was a new beginning. Below is a photo of the interior of the new store.



Swede's Jewelers in Warehouse Point

Stan died on Sept. 4, 2011 at age 91. He and Alice had celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary. They had 8 children and 17 grandchildren. He and his wife travelled the world seeking the best new trends in jewelry. He was a member of the American Legion, the Gensi-Viola Post No. 36, the Knights of Columbus, and he was a past commander of the WFW Smalley Brothers Post 6123. He sponsored the Windsor Locks Swedes Little League team. He played golf and bowled. Stan lived a full life, and he prepared his children to take over the business.

Below is a photo of Rob Szwed, Elaine (Szwed) and Stan Szwed, Jr. in the Warehouse Point store. Rob and Stan went to jewelry repair school at the Gemological Institute of America, when they were old enough. As of 2019, their business is 73 years old, and they hope that family offspring will keep the family business going for a long time.



Rob, Elaine and Stan

Conclusion

Swede's Jewelers began in 1946 and is still going strong. The Charles Ten Restaurant began about the same time. Their location was not included in the section of Main Street that was in the Main Street Redevelopment Project, so they escaped being bought and torn down in about 1975. Anne Tenerowicz sold her business in 2017. It had been the longest running of the retail businesses in town. Swede's Jewelers is still in business in 2019, so it is the longest running of the Windsor Locks businesses that were along Main Street, even though it had to move to Warehouse Point to do that. The history of Swede's Jewelers proves that a family business can succeed and last. They survived the flood of 1955, the urban renewal of 1974, evolving styles and evolving technologies.

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The sources for the ads in the *Windsor Locks Journal* are given in the text.

Chapter 33

Miss Jane Carr Dies on the Titanic



Miss Jane Carr

Miss Jane Carr, who went by the name of Jennie, was born in Tubbercurry, County Sligo, Ireland on Feb. 11, 1867. Tubbercurry is a small town that had a population of about 650 people at that time. She was the daughter of Thomas Carr, a farmer, and his wife, Bridget. She had seven brothers and sisters. She migrated to the United States in 1889 to make a better life for herself. She worked as a domestic and a cook in Springfield, MA. Then she found similar work in Hartford, CT. After that, she moved to Windsor Lock, where she did the same in the home of Frank Ashley, and then in the home of Dr. Sidney Burnap. The *Shanachie*, the newsletter of the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society, described why Jane enjoyed living and working in Windsor Locks. It said:

“ Whether Jane had relatives or Sligo neighbors in Windsor Locks or Springfield is not known, but she could not have felt out of place in a community in which 425, or 15% of the 3,062 residents were born in Ireland. Among the 230 Irishwomen were 16 other domestic servants and nine nuns teaching at St. Mary’s parochial school. Many of the 195 Irishmen found employment in the paper and textile mills.”

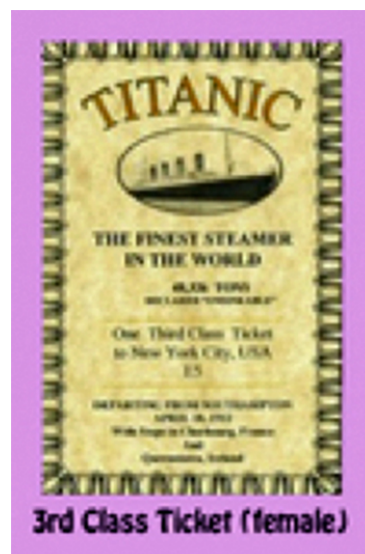
While working at the Burnap home in 1900, a census worker visited the house. The household consisted of the 74 year old Burnap, his 57 year old wife,

Clara A Burnap, their children Mary, Clara and Sydney, Jr. Lastly she worked as a cook at the Chicopee Falls Hotel. She had a number of nephews and nieces nearby, which she helped emigrate to the United States. Miss Carr was, by all accounts, a pleasant, likable, capable woman.

Back in Ireland, her father died at aged 73 in 1893, and her mother died the year after. Jennie decided to return home. In 1909, Jane left the United States, and returned to her native Ireland to care for nephews and nieces. Her sister's husband, Thady Mullarkey, had died. That Christmas, Jane attended the wedding of her sister, Maria, to Michael Dooney of County Sligo. She stayed with her sister, Mrs. Catherine Mullarkey. She appeared in the 1911 census as part of the Mullarkey household.

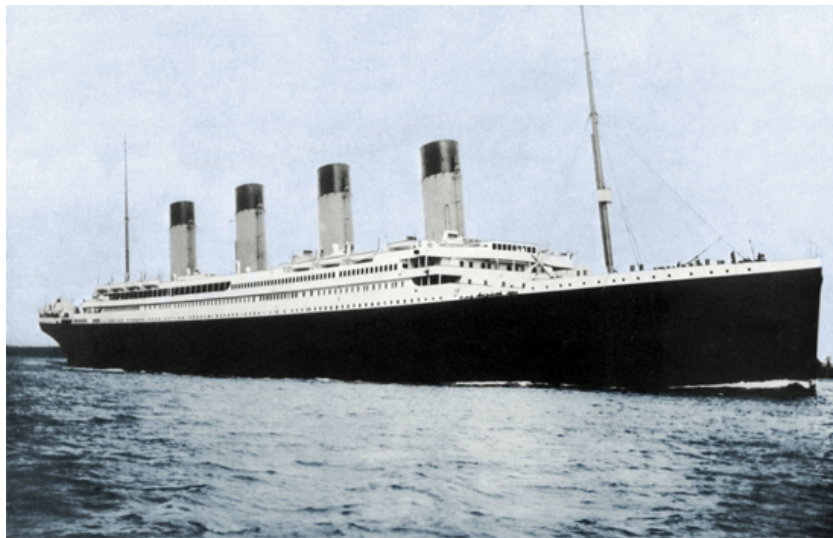
While working in Windsor Locks, Jane had put her savings into the Windsor Locks Savings Bank. Before leaving for Ireland, she asked two of her fellow immigrants, Michael and Catherine O'Leary, of Windsor Locks, to look after her bank accounts. In 1912, Mrs. O'Leary wrote to Jane in Ireland, to tell her that the Windsor Locks Savings Bank had been shut down, and that she needed to come back and close out her accounts.

Miss Carr bought a third class ticket on the Titanic to return to the United States. Her ticket number was 368364. It was a third class ticket for a woman, such as the one below.



She boarded the Titanic in Queenstown, Ireland. The ship had begun its maiden voyage in Southampton. It made a stop in Cherbourg, France, and then went on to Queenstown, where Miss Carr boarded it. The Titanic struck an iceberg on April 14, 1912. Of the more than 2200 people on board, of which 1,316 were passengers and 900 were crew, only 710 survived. They were the

women and children who were gotten onto the lifeboats. Below is a photo of the Titanic.



The Titanic

Jane died when the Titanic sank. Officially, her body has never been officially identified. After her death, Michael O'Leary either wrote a letter to, or received a letter from Jane's brother James in Ireland. Mr. O'Leary told the probate court which was handling the bank's affairs, that Jane Carr had holdings in the Savings Bank of Windsor Locks, and had died while coming back to Windsor Locks to take care of her account. The court appointed a Mr. Joseph P. Tuttle to be the administrator of Miss Carr's estate. The Shanachie article described what happened, stating:

"Tuttle inventoried the estate and found that Carr had an account of \$1,460 in the Windsor Locks Savings Bank and of \$494 in the Institution of Savings in Springfield. Before the estate could be settled, it was necessary to settle whether at the time of her death, Carr was a resident of Connecticut or of Ireland. She had been in Ireland for three years and it as reported that she had decided to remain and was returning only to settle her finances. Whether that was the case or not, O'Leary signed documents indicating that in his communications, he did not mean to indicate that Carr considered herself as residing in Ireland. The residency apparently would make differences in the distribution, or in the red tape that was involved. On the assurance of O'Leary, Tuttle considered still considered Carr to be a resident of Connecticut in the settlement. Another hitch was that through the malfeasance of a bank official, the Windsor Locks Savings Bank had failed.

Because of the overall claims on that bank, her actual savings, as apparently were those of other bank patrons, were reduced by more than 20%. With expenses and fees taken out, that left \$1,104 for distribution to the heirs. Her brothers and sisters - James, Thomas, Michael, Bridget and Mary Carr and Catherine Mullarkey - received \$184 each in an initial distribution.”

The amounts that were distributed seem very small. However, they were “1912 dollars”. Those amounts would have been much bigger in 2019. For example, the \$1,104 that was available for distribution would be \$28,600 in 2019 dollars. The \$494 in the Springfield bank would be worth \$12,800 in 2019 dollars. She had accumulated savings worth about \$40,000 (in 2019 dollars) while working as a domestic in and around Windsor Locks in 1912. That is what was left after having paid for a number of her relatives to emigrate to the United States. The \$184 given to each of her heirs, would be worth \$4,800. For an individual living in a small town in Ireland at that time, that would have been a small fortune.

On Sunday, April 15, 2012, an event was held in Windsor Locks in memory of Jane Carr. It consisted of a walk from Sunset Street at 10 AM, which went to Railroad Station on Main Street, and then to St. Mary’s Church, the home of Mr. and Mrs. O’Leary, and finally to the homes of the people that she worked for in Windsor Locks. At each stop, Miss Carr’s grandniece, Peg Carr Shaughnessy, left a bouquet of flowers. The Burnap mansion was open for tours in the afternoon.

Conclusion

When this story is told in Windsor Locks, it is often told as part of the story of the embezzlement by Mr. A. W. Converse from the Windsor Locks Savings Bank. It is true that Miss Jane Carr died while coming back to Windsor Locks to resolve her account in the bank, which Mr. Converse caused to fail. However, he certainly didn’t cause her death. Jane Carr came from an impoverished Ireland to the United States to make a better life for herself. She was a fine person and did well by working in the homes of rich clients and as a cook in a hotel. She amassed a goodly amount of savings in doing that. She also spent a lot of time, energy and money bringing relatives from Ireland to the United States in order for them to be able to achieve a better life. She was a woman to be admired.

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Chapter 34

Windsor Locks Humor

The European immigrants that flocked to Windsor Locks in the early 1900s changed the nature of the town. The town had large Italian, Irish and Polish populations as well as French, English, German and other nationalities. Growing up in the 1940s, 50s and 60, one went to schools that were primarily white, and primarily first and second generation immigrants. While the various nationalities did “hang out” together, instances of trouble between immigrants and descendants of immigrants was almost unheard of. All of the immigrant populations worked together in the mills along the canal.

There is an old Windsor Locks ethnic joke that can be told from either the Italian or the Polish perspective, just by changing a few of the words. Here it is told from the Italian perspective. Folks of Polish descent should feel free to tell it the other way. In both cases, no hard feelings are intended. This joke was born before the days of “Political Correctness”. (Author’s note. When I grew up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, I never saw a single incident of bad feelings or fighting between descendants of people of different ethnic heritage. Of course, there were “fights” among boys at times, but for other reasons. I have heard the following joke told both ways, and always with a smile.)

Person 1: In Windsor Locks, the Polish National Home was near the Italian-American Society.

Person 2: Was there ever any trouble between the two groups?

Person 1: Well, once there was a small incident.

Person 2: Really, what happened?

Person 1: Well, on Saturday nights, there was always some drinking that was going on in both clubs.

Person 2: Sure. Of course. But what happened?

Person 1: One night, some of the Polish folks came over to the Italian American Club, and threw some fire crackers on the front lawn?

Person 2: Wow. Really. What did the Italians do?

Person 1: They lit them, and threw them back.

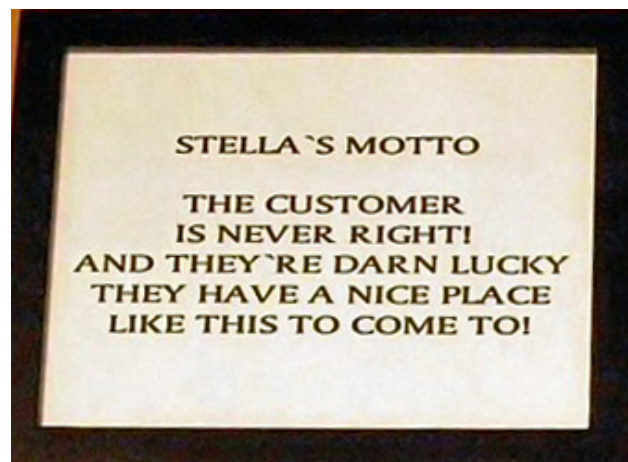
It is easy to switch the words around, and tell that joke from the Polish perspective. Here is a second old Windsor Locks joke. It is a bit of a “Shaggy Dog Story” with regard to fishing. Citizens of Windsor Locks have had a long love affair with fishing in the river. Here is the joke.

One Saturday morning, four of us went down to the Connecticut River, behind the Dexter plant. We put on our waders, and went fishing for carp. We

were in the water for four hours, and we didn't catch anything. Around noon, I said: "Let's go to Wuzzy's and get some lunch." We got out of the river, and started taking off our waders. I noticed that my wallet was missing from my pocket. I was frantic. We all looked everywhere, and couldn't find it. Then we looked up and saw a two carp fly up a few inches above the water. One of them had my wallet in his mouth. He flicked his head and tossed it to the other carp, who caught it in mid air. This happened three times. It was the best example of "carp to carp walleting" that I had ever seen.

If you didn't get it, the humor is supposed to come from the similarity of the phrase to "wall to wall carpeting". Oh, well. Not all jokes are award winners.

Some of the best humor in Windsor Locks could be found on the walls of Stella's Charles Ten Restaurant. Stella has a great sense of humor. She had the following sign hanging on a wall.



There was another sign that said:
"Eat before you come here because the wait can be as fast as twenty minutes or as slow as two hours."

Stella's Charles Ten restaurant had a very small kitchen with a single stove, and a single cook. Besides, the food there was not of the fast-food variety. It was very good Polish and Italian food, and it takes a while to prepare.

As far as humor goes, Stella's Charles Ten has another bit of humor. In Windsor Locks, for the entire life of that restaurant, it was the place to be on St. Patrick's Day. There are not many towns in which the best place to celebrate St. Patrick's Day is a Polish bar. Maybe that's irony, but irony is pretty close to humor.

Bottom line: Windsor Locks has been a welcoming place where happiness and humor are valued. The probable reason for that is the fact that so many different ethnic cultures have existed in such a small place. You had to have a sense of humor, just to make things work. Intermarriage among the various ethnic groups was the rule, not the exception.

Chapter 35

John A. Chapman: Medal of Honor Recipient

John Chapman was born on July 14, 1965, and grew up in Windsor Locks. He went to Windsor Locks High School, where he was a stand-out sportsman in both soccer and diving. He led his school's team to the Central Valley League championship one year, and he earned winning spots in the Interscholastic Athletic Conference in all four of his high school years (1980 through 1983). He won Class S events in 1982 and 1983, and he placed second in the State Open in 1983. In his high school yearbook, he had the words: "Give of yourself before asking of someone else". He was known as a team player.



John A. Chapman

After high school, John attended the University of Connecticut, and was on the diving team. Following his first semester at UCONN, he returned to Windsor Locks, and got a job in an auto body shop. He found that wasn't for him, so he joined the US Air Force.

John enlisted in the United States Air Force on September 27, 1985, and was trained as an Information Systems Operator. Chapman's first assignment was with the 1987th Information Systems Squadron at Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado, where he served from February 1986 to June 1989. He then cross-trained into the Combat Control career field and served with the 1721st Combat Control Squadron at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, from August

1990 to November 1992. His next assignment was as a Special Tactics Team Member with the 320th Special Tactics Squadron at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, from November 1992 to October 1995. Chapman's final assignment was with the 24th Special Tactics Squadron at Pope Air Force Base.

There are two important points in the above description of his training. The first is that he was well trained over a period of ten years. The second is that he switched specialties from that of an Information Systems specialist, which is a "desk job," to that of a Combat Controller, which is a very important and dangerous job that is done in the field. He wasn't happy with the desk job and made the request to become a Combat Controller.



TSgt Chapman ready for parachute jump



TSgt John A. Chapman

On March 4, 2002, Chapman was on an assignment with an elite Navy Seal Team in Afghanistan. He was killed in the battle which took place that day. Sixteen years after John Chapman's death, the Air Force awarded John Chapman the Medal of Honor for his actions on that day. The citation for that medal tells the story of what happened that day:

Technical Sergeant John A. Chapman distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism as an Air Force Special Tactics Combat Controller, attached to a Navy Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) Team conducting reconnaissance operations in Takur Ghar, Afghanistan, on March 4, 2002. During insertion, the team's helicopter was ambushed causing a teammate to fall into an entrenched group of enemy combatants below. Sergeant Chapman and the team voluntarily reinserted onto the snow-capped mountain, into the heart of a known enemy stronghold to rescue one of their own. Without regard for his own safety, Sergeant Chapman immediately engaged, moving in the direction of the closest enemy position despite coming under heavy fire from multiple directions. He fearlessly charged an enemy bunker, up a steep incline in thigh-deep snow and into hostile fire, directly engaging the enemy. Upon reaching the bunker, Sergeant Chapman assaulted and cleared the position, killing all enemy occupants. With complete disregard for his own life, Sergeant Chapman deliberately moved from cover only 12 meters from the enemy, and exposed himself once again to attack a second bunker, from which an emplaced machine gun was firing on his team. During this assault from an exposed position directly in the line of intense fire, Sergeant Chapman was struck and injured by enemy fire. Despite severe, mortal wounds, he continued to fight relentlessly, sustaining a violent engagement with multiple enemy personnel before making the ultimate sacrifice. By his heroic actions and extraordinary valor, sacrificing his life for the lives of his teammates, Technical Sergeant Chapman upheld the highest traditions of military service and reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_A._Chapman

On August 22, 2018, President Trump posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor to John A. Chapman for his actions in the Battle of Takur Ghar. The medal was presented to his widow, Valerie Nessel, in a ceremony in the East Room of the White House. John's mother, Terry Chapman, and John and Valerie's two daughters, Brianna and Madison were at the presentation ceremony. Below is a photo that was taken right after the Medal of Honor award ceremony.



After the Medal of Honor presentation. John Chapman's wife, Valerie Nessel, and his mother, Terry Chapman, are flanked by his daughters, Brianna and Madison.,

On the day after the award ceremony, Chapman was inducted into the Hall of Heroes, which is in the Pentagon. On the day after that, he was posthumously promoted to Master Sergeant. He was the first airman to receive the Medal of Honor for actions since the Vietnam War. He was the 3,503 recipient of the Medal of Honor.

In November of 2018, Smalley Brothers VFW Post 6123 of Windsor Locks hosted a gathering of John's classmates, and memorialized him with the plaque which is pictured below.



Conclusion

John Chapman was a military man, a husband and a father. He was a man to be liked, respected and honored. He was a true American Hero. He is a source of great pride for the town of Windsor Locks.

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Chapter 36

The Brown Derby



The Brown Derby, Main Street, Windsor Locks. It replaced the ABC Market, which burned down. The Brown Derby was owned by John Romanofsky and his wife, Lorriane Magleora Romanofsky, and later by Lorraine's father, Dave Magleora, who lived at Coly's Hotel on Main Street.

The Brown Derby was a bar/restaurant that was located at 232 Main Street in Windsor Locks. It was just north of where Grove St. meets Main St. The Brown Derby was originally started, owned and operated by John and Lorraine Romanofsky, who lived on 16 Birge Street in Windsor Locks. Lorraine was the daughter of David "Dave" Magleora, who was the long-time manager of the Rialto Theater. Later he became the owner of the Brown Derby.

For a long time, the Brown Derby was a bar/restaurant. It had two sections, one of which was a bar, and the other was a restaurant. The setup was much like Bianchi's Bar/Restaurant, which was just a block away. At some point in existence, the Brown Derby ceased to be a restaurant. The restaurant section remained, and you could get a drink at the bar and go over and sit in the restaurant area.

Windsor Locks telephone books in 1950 and 1955 list the Brown Derby address as 232 Main Street, and the phone number as NATIONAL 3-7508.

The grand opening of the Brown Derby was on Saturday night, April 6, 1946. This can be seen in the advertisement of the grand opening which is below. It was a grand event, with a Hawaiian-themed band. The food was definitely up-scale, including steaks, chops and lobsters. In the 1940s and 1950s, many restaurants across the United States were named the "Brown Derby". The original "Brown Derby" was a chain of restaurants in Los Angeles that started in the 1920s. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_Derby) A photo of the original one of that chain is below. You can see how the shape of that original restaurant is quite similar to the lighted sign on the front of Windsor Locks's Brown Derby. There were many bar/restaurants in the United States named the Brown Derby, after the Los Angeles chain made the name famous.

**BE SURE TO "GET IN" ON THE
GRAND OPENING
of
THE BROWN DERBY**

The Newest and Smartest Night-Spot in Windsor Locks

232 Main Street

SATURDAY NIGHT, APRIL 6th, 1946

featuring

BILLY JOY

and his

Blue Hawaiians

Smooth - Sweet - Rythm

Dancing 9 P. M. 'Til 1 A. M.

Minimum Cover Charge \$1.00

If you're looking for that "extra something" so necessary in the preparation of delicious food - we've got it. Come in and spend an evening with us - whether its "just you and the date" or a "family dinner"!

We particularly specialize in

- STEAKS
- CHOPS
- LOBSTERS

During most of the years that John and Lorraine Romanofsky owned the Derby, they had a bowling team that was active in the leagues at the Villa Rose Bowling Alley. Between the years 1952 and 1962, there were about 40 articles with the scores of the Brown Derby bowling in the *Windsor Locks Journal*. For a number of years, they also had a softball team, whose scores were posted in the *Windsor Locks Journal*. In the February 2, 1950 issue of the *Windsor Locks*

Journal, there was an article which listed the taxes paid by Windsor Locks businesses. That year, the Brown Derby paid \$17, 155 in taxes, which had them high on the list of taxes paid. The business must have been doing very well.

There was one more article about the Brown Derby in the *Windsor Locks Journal*. It was in the June 14, 1973 issue, which had an article on the demolition of the building. This took place during the period of the Main Street Redevelopment project, in which the town bought up the retail businesses along Main Street, and demolished all of the buildings, promising that new businesses would come in to replace the old businesses, and they would build new buildings. The demolition of the old buildings was accomplished, but the promised influx of new businesses never happened. Below is the article about the closing of the Brown Derby, along with a very poor quality photo of the Brown Derby building during its demolition.

It Isn't The Same

A real institution in Windsor Locks is hitting the dust.

Finally we can believe that urban renewal is renewing

When The **Brown Derby** had its last party, it seemed like times were changing, but when the building goes you've gotta believe it.

Ask anybody and you can hear a good tale about The **Brown Derby**. It even enters into the story of Windsor Locks' 100th anniversary celebration of the town's incorporation as a separate town from Windsor.

It seems that there was a big picnic at Pesci Park and at a certain point the ladies looked around and noticed that all the men were gone. So as a part of the anniversary there was the

march by the ladies in their aprons down to the **Brown Derby** to get all the men to come back to join the picnic.

Most Irish will tell you that when the Irish came to build the canal, Windsor Locks' famous one-sided Main Street bordering the canal featured two different types of things — St. Mary's Church, and a number of establishments where one could purchase liquor. The number of these establishments today is still a problem for those working on downtown renewal — with seven in a small area, and a town regulation that they must be 1,500 feet apart, things have got to change.

We won't decide if its good or bad, but it sure isn't the same.

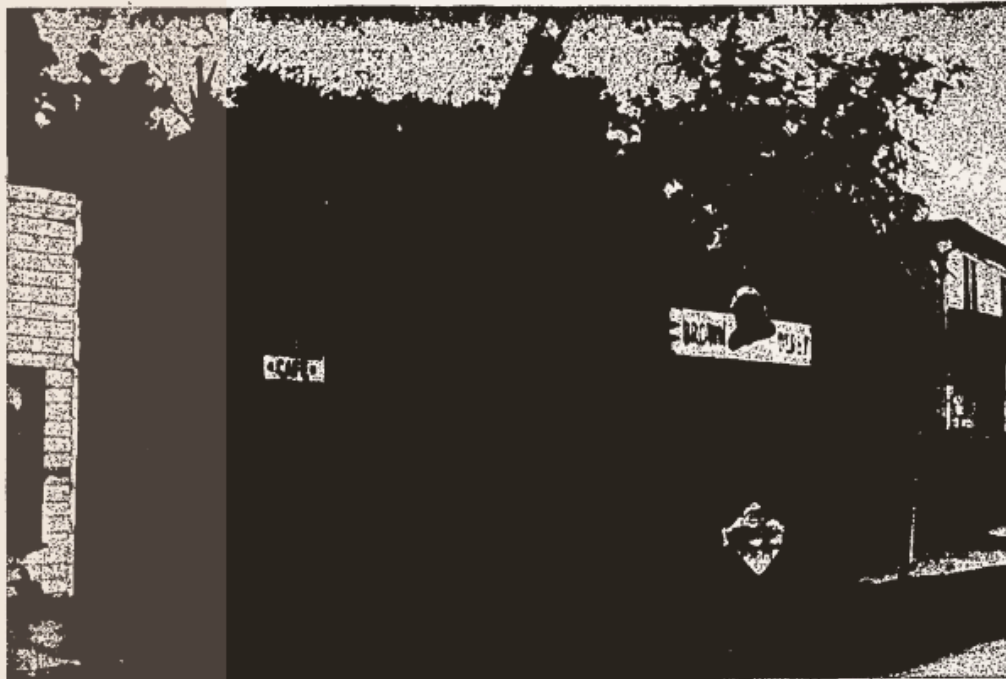
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Last of the Brown Derby

The front of the Brown Derby — a landmark in Windsor Locks — remained standing Wednesday morning as the back was smashed in by demolition workers. The crane looms over the

buildings as the work continues. Other structures between the Brown Derby and Grove Street were also being torn down. —[Bouchard Photo]

So when did the ownership of the Brown Derby pass from the original owners, John and Lorraine Romanofsky to Lorraine's father, Dave Magleora, who was also the long-time manager of the Rialto Theater? The exact date could not be identified for this article, however information exists to estimate when it happened. John Romanofsky's obituary is at the end of this article. He died on November 8, 1968 at a local convalescent home. Dave Magleora's obituary is also at the end of this article. We know from the obituary of Magleora, that he operated the Brown Derby for eight years. We know from the *Windsor Locks Journal* article on the end of the Brown Derby that it closed in 1973. Since Mr. Magleora owned it for eight years, he must have bought it in about 1965. This fits with the fact that John Romanofsky died in 1968, while he was in a convalescent home.

The bowling team and the softball team did not exist during Dave Magleora's period of ownership. He was a busy man, running both the bar and the Rialto Theater. My brother, Lenny Montemerlo, knew Dave Magleora, because Dave lived at our grandparent's hotel, Coly's Hotel, which was on Main Street, between the Rialto Theater and the Brown Derby. When he was 18, Lenny and some of his friends went to the Brown Derby once in a while, and Dave would give them copies of the playbills for the Rialto. They would take these playbills and give one to each of the stores along Main Street to put in

their windows. That was cheap advertisement for what would be playing at the Theater in the next week. In return for doing this, Dave gave them free tickets to the movie. In discussing the Brown Derby, Lenny told me that his friends, Ray and Michele Graczyk once lived in the house that John and Lorraine Romanofsky lived in on 16 Birge Street in Windsor Locks. The kitchen floor was covered in linoleum and in the center was an inlaid Brown Derby.

A search for photos of John and Lorraine Romanofsky and of Dave Magleora yielded only one old photo of John Romanofsky, which was taken from a family history website (<http://www.bakerancestry.org/public/pedigree/2506.htm>)



John Romanofsky



The Obituaries of John Romanofsky and of David Magleora

The following obituaries of John Romanofsky and David Magleora provided information for this article. It is very interesting that John Romanofsky's obituary said that he worked for the Royal Typewriter Company of Hartford, but never mentioned that he owned and operated the Brown Derby.

David Magleora Had Restaurant

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn. — David E. Magleora, 76, of 182 Main St., owner of the former Brown Derby restaurant, died Wednesday in Rocky Hill Veterans Home and Hospital after a long illness.

A lifelong resident here, he was an Army veteran of World War I. He was manager of the former Rialto Theater 25 years and owned the Brown Derby eight years. He was a member of Gensie - Viola American Legion Post.

Besides his wife, the former Hannah Malansn, he leaves a daughter, Mrs. John Sartori, and a brother, Raymond, all of this town.

The funeral will be Friday morning at Windsor Locks funeral home with a liturgy of Christian burial in St. Mary's Church. Burial will be in St. Bernard's Cemetery, Enfield.

DEATHS

Miss Catherine E. Sullivan
Windsor Locks

Miss Catherine E. Sullivan of Center street in Windsor Locks, a resident of the town many years, died Monday at her home.

Born in Ireland, she resided in Windsor Locks practically all of her life, and was employed at the former Medlicott Company in this town. She was a long-time member of St. Mary's church in Windsor Locks.

Miss Sullivan is the last of her immediate family, and leaves two nephews, William R. O'Brien of East Hartford, and Frank J. Kirk of Hartford; a niece, Mrs. Frank M. Cosgrove of Hartford; and several nieces and nephews out of state.

The funeral was held Wednesday morning at the Johnson Funeral Home in Windsor Locks, followed by a solemn requiem mass in St. Mary's church at 9 o'clock, and burial was in St. Mary's cemetery.

John Romanofsky
Windsor Locks

John Romanofsky aged 55

years, of Birge street, Windsor Locks, died Monday at a local convalescent home.

Born in Colchester, he lived in Windsor Locks for the past twenty-two years. He was employed by Royal Typewriter Company in Hartford. He was a member of the Lions Club.

He leaves his wife, Mrs. Lorraine (Magleora) Romanofsky; his mother, Mrs. Ellen Romanofsky of Colchester; two brothers, Joseph Romanofsky of Chicago, and Henry Romanofsky of Colchester; three sisters, Mrs. Frank Czaja of Moodus, Mrs. Wanda Hamel of Windsor and Mrs. Mary Bujnowski of Colchester.

The funeral was held today (Thursday) at 8.30 a. m., at the Johnson Funeral Home in Windsor Locks, with a solemn requiem mass in St. Mary's Church, Windsor Locks, at 9 o'clock. Burial was in St. Bernard's Cemetery, Hazardville.

C. F. Horne, president of the Pamona Division of General Dynamics Corporation stated: "The long-range future of our free enterprise system is dependent upon the young people now in school and the education they will receive."

David Magliora's obituary was in the July 19, 1973 issue of the *Springfield Union*. John Romanofsky's obituary was in the November 21, 1968 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal*.

Sources: The names of the newspapers and the dates of publication are listed next to each of the articles.

Chapter 37

Windsor Locks Athletic Hall of Fame



The Windsor Locks Athletic Hall of Fame was established in 2005. Its mission is to honor the many achievements of the town's athletes and supporters of local sports. Each year, since 2005, a number of Windsor Locks citizens are inducted into the Hall of Fame. Each inductee receives a beautiful plaque to keep. A duplicate plaque is also placed on a wall of honor at the entrance to the Windsor Locks Town Hall, which is the old Union School on Church Street.

The website for the Windsor Lock Athletic Hall of Fame is found at:
<http://www.windsorlocks-hof.com/links/>

That website gives excellent write-ups on each of the inductees. Many of them were outstanding not only in sports but also in their careers.

From 2005 through 2017, inductees included:

- 78 individuals
- 2 husband and wife pairs
- 11 teams

The following is a list of the inductees by year from 2005 through 2017.

2005

- 1965 Little League World Champions
- Joe Fitzpatrick
- David Lingua
- Dr. Pete Lingua
- Bob Norris
- Carrie Schiessl Ghareeb
- Robert O'Connor
- Dan Sullivan
- Craig Winter

2006

- Michael Collins
- Michael Heneghan
- Russell Jubrey
- Lori Longfritz
- Robert Morrell

2007

- Larry Lichstein
- Russell Mattesen
- Holly Storms Muehlenkamp
- Elias "Spud" Shapiro
- Steve Scheerer
- 1963,1964 State Soccer Champs

2008

- Theodore Netcoh
- Pat Scelza
- Sue Tremblay
- Vincent Colapietro
- Steven Szykula
- 1966 Baseball Champions

2009

- Carolyn Bravakis
- Robert Cressoti
- David Farr
- Catherine Flanders
- George Hall
- Michael Mascaro

- 1966 State Champion Indoor Track Team

2010

- Joe Barberi
- Wendy Davies Stauffer
- Peter Maltese
- Michael O'Connor
- 1970 State Champion Soccer Team
- 1971 State Champion Soccer Team

2011

- Carmen Guido
- Jason Hamley
- John Magnani
- William Stone
- Howie Tersavich
- Judy Van Schelt Jones

2012

- Ted Kone
- Tom Koren
- Lou LaTorra
- Tara Malcolm Phelps
- Peter Preli
- Sonya West (Pohoylo-Macierowski)
- 1978 State Softball Champions
-

2013

- Paul Ciarcia
- Bill Lash
- Elmer "Red" Leary
- Brian McKeown
- Steve Michalewitz
- Robert Nussbaum
- Trina Quagliaroli

2014

- Fran Aniello
- Charlie Zien
- Debra Lee
- Frank Netcoh
- Roscoe Gray
- Raymond Roncari
- Mark Savage
- 1990 Soccer Team State Champions
- Roland and Rita Murdock

2015

- Eileen Farr Annis
- Sean Bravakis
- Bob Fraher
- Bob Murray
- Scott Willet
- Joan and Fred Allen

2016

- Sidney Burnap, Jr.
- Gina Cangemi Garfield
- Rich Macierowski
- Don Pisati
- Peter Sarant
- 1994 State Soccer Champions
- Fan of the Game: Don Gilbert

2017

- Frank Carroll
- John Chapman
- Erica Goralski
- Mary-Jane Hussey
- Tom Mehan
- Gary Morrell
- 2001 Class S Boys State Basketball Champions
- Fan of the Game: Leonard Senofonte

Sources:

<http://www.windsorlocks-hof.com/links/>

Chapter 38

Italian, Polish and Irish Social Clubs

The Windsor Locks of the late 1800s and the early 1900s needed unskilled, low-paid people to work in the mills along the canal. Immigrants from Poland, Italy, and Ireland flocked into Windsor Locks in that time period. When they arrived, they had no money and they didn't speak English. They were in a strange land with customs and foods that were foreign to them. They had left difficult times in their home countries.

In a situation like that, one needs to find ways to be comfortable. One way was to associate with others from the same country. They did that by forming ethnic social clubs. They formed social clubs both for social reasons and to get help on fitting into their new world. This chapter reviews three Italian, one Polish and one Irish club, which formed for these purposes. Those clubs fit the needs of the times. When times changed, the clubs changed.

“The Italian American Citizens Club” / “The Italian American Club “

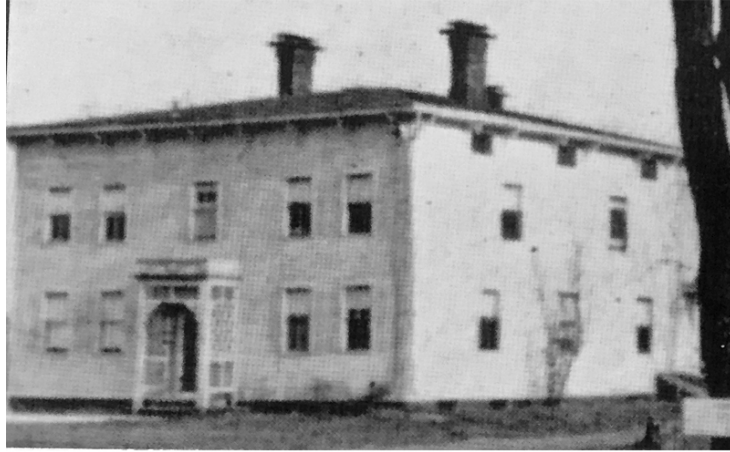
The “Italian American Citizens Club” was founded in August of 1930. It's founding principles were stated as:

- 1) to help naturalized Italian men and women better understand local and national government,
- 2) to help educate future citizens, and
- 3) to teach the ideals of Americanism.

(Windsor Locks Journal, August 11, 1930)

A search of the *Windsor Locks Journal* archives shows that the Italian American Citizens Club was only mentioned four more times. There were three notices of meetings called in the 1930s. No more mention is made of the club until the Oct. 17, 1963 issue, which says that the “Italian American Club” had been organized as the “Italian American Citizens Club”. So, if you want to find out what the Italian American Citizens Club did after 1930, you try to learn about the “Italian American Club”.

The Italian American Club bought the Mary Webb home on South Center Street from C. H. Dexter & Co. to use as a clubhouse. Dexter had used it as housing for single men working in their mill. See the photo below. After that, the *Windsor Locks Journal* archives show that the Italian American Club was very active. They had hundreds of business meetings, parties, dances, weddings, card tournaments, etc, from the 1930s through the 1970s.



Italian-American Club - 1930

In January of 1963, the clubhouse that they bought in 1930 was destroyed by fire. The October 17, 1963 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* announced the dedication of a new Italian American Club building, and the public was invited. A photo of that building is below.



Italian American Club

That single-story brick building on South Center Street is referred to as the IAC. The sign on the building says: "IAC".

The October 17, 1963 article lists the names of some of the original members of the club as: Bellino, Bellingeri, Lodola, Paganelli, Colli, Carnevale, Molinari, Bevilacqua, Tambussi and Montemerlo. Those are all Italian names. The article named the 1963 officers of the club. Their last names were: Murphy, Smalley, Fiore, and Brown. There is one Italian name in that group. That is the first clue that the nature of the club had been changing.

The Jan. 3, 1973 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* had an article entitled "Italian American Club Facing Foreclosure". It said that the original reason for the Club was for Italian immigrants living in Windsor Locks. Those immigrants were now all gone, and their descendants were fully Americanized. With

dwindling membership, the club had to attract new members. Expenses had exceeded income, and the club was facing possible foreclosure on its building. The club president at the time, Paul Ortsendroff said that while the club is still called the Italian American Club, but anyone may join.

The Feb. 7, 2017 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* had an article entitled “Italian American Club Back on the Rise”. It makes clear that the club needed a shift in membership. They were also renting out the building for everything from birthday parties and baby showers.

Essentially, it is no longer an Italian fraternal organization. That is not a bad thing. Times have changed, and private clubs must change with the times if they want to stay in business

The Italian Progressive Club (The IPC)



The Italian Progressive Club

The *Windsor Locks Journal* mentioned the Italian Progressive Club 668 times in the years from 1932 to 1974. Starting in 1931, the club met in the hall of the Italian Cooperative Society on Spring Street. The most frequent activity in the early years was card tournaments. The game of choice was Setback. Card tournaments within the club lasted up to six weeks. Tournaments were also held with other local groups such as the Fire Department and Italian clubs from neighboring towns.

Weddings were held at the clubhouse. The newspaper articles describe a wide variety of social events at the clubhouse including concerts, bocce ball tournaments and benefits for various groups such as the Red Cross. The activities must have been frequent because there were 150 mentions in the 1950s, and 207 in the 1960s. Then things slowed down. There were only 35 mentions in the 1970s .

An overview of the history of the IPC was provided by *The Story of Windsor Locks: 1663-1954*. The club was founded in the 1930s by eight Italians whose goal was to elevate the social activities for Italians in Windsor Locks. Their first meeting was in a private home in back of Sisitzky's Market. A few

months later, they bought two lots on Suffield Street, and they built a clubhouse there. A Ladies Auxiliary was formed in 1949.

Their clubhouse, pictured above, still exists at 97 Suffield Street. In the past, it was referred to as the North End Italian Club, but now it is usually referred to as the IPC, which is what the sign says over the front door. Looking it up on the internet, many of the comments say: "Private Club". It is going through the same set of pressures that the IAC is going through.

The Saint Oronzo Society

Many of the Italian immigrants in Windsor Locks in the early 1900s came from a small town named Turi, in southern Italy. It included the Zaccheo, Colapietro, Lefemine, Borracci, and Bellini families. Turi is located near the large city of Bari. It was a very poor rural, agricultural area, and the times were difficult there at the turn of the century. The men from there who left for America were called "i braccianti," which loosely translates to "laborers".

When the families from Turi arrived in Windsor Locks, they helped each other out, and when they had saved up some money, they helped their brothers and sisters come from Turi to join them. The patron saint of Turi is Saint Oronzo, and every year, Turi held a festival on St. Oronzo Day. These families got the same tradition started in Windsor Locks. St. Mary's Church had a large statue of Saint Oronzo, which was carried through the streets in the annual celebration that they started here.

A group of people from Turi started the Saint Oronzo Society in Windsor Locks. The first Saint Oronzo Day celebration was held in 1919. It was much like the ones they held annually until 1962. The Saint Oronzo Society put ads in the *Windsor Locks Journal* to sell the St Oronzo Park land and building on Southwest Ave in 1962. In 1963, the property was bought by the Catholic Church, and turned into the Bellarmine Center.

The first St. Oronzo Day festival in Windsor Locks was in 1919. It was much like the last festival, which occurred in 1962. It had a parade and ended with food and fireworks.

In 1926, the St. Oronzo Society bought 40 acres of land in the South part of town, from the Bidwell Co. The *Windsor Locks Journal* issue of July 30, 1926, said that purchase was partly a business venture, and partly to use for the festivals. The land faced on South Main Street.

In 1952, they bought property on Southwest Ave, and erected a building. After that, the annual Festival always ended there, with food, music and fireworks.

The parades were a throwback to the parades in Italy. They had an Italian marching band playing the type of music you expect at an Italian festival. In the parade featured a large statue of St. Oronzo. Along the way, people gave dollar bills, which were pinned to long strings of dollar bills hanging from the

statue. They had Italian food and treats, and they always ended with fireworks. Below is a photo of part of a St. Oronzo celebration that was taken in front of St. Mary's Church. It was probably from the 1940s.



*St. Oronzo celebration, St. Mary's Church, Windsor Locks, Conn.
Vito Colapietro, President of St. Oronzo Society standing in front of statue*

The St. Oronzo Society had a large, positive effect on Windsor Locks. Their events were memorable. They were part of the fabric of the town. They will not be forgotten by those who experienced them. It started with a group of Italians from a town in Italy that is smaller than Windsor Locks. As time went on, the immigrants from Turi, Italy in Windsor Locks diminished, and finally, the glue that was needed to hold the group together was gone.

The Polish National Alliance Group / Polish National Home

The July 18, 1930 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* had an article about the Polish National Alliance Group. It said that the group had formed in Windsor Locks in 1910 with fifteen members that was chapter No. 1202 of a national group with the same name. Its members had just built a new building on Second Street that would be its clubhouse. Originally they met in a store on South Street. Then they met in Coogan's Hall on Main Street. Then they met in the homes of members, and in 1938 they built a new Polish Home.

In 1934, the Polish National Alliance organized the Polish-American Club to encourage public spirit, social cooperation and self-improvement. In 1935 they organized a Fife and Drum Corps which disbanded in 1942 because of World War II. In 1937, they organized a Polish School for young people which met at the Windsor Locks Public School on Saturday afternoons. In 1938, they formed a corporation of the Polish National Home. The new home was finished at 9 First Street. The following photo shows the first Polish Home on Second Street and the current one on First Street.

**First Polish Home
Built in 1930
on Second Street**

**Current Polish Home
Built in 1939
on First Street**



**Bobby Pohorylo, Josephine Pohorylo,
Josephine MaGovern. Stella Pohorylo**

Following is a photo of the current Polish National Home on First Street. It is the same as shown on the right in the above photo



Polish National Home

Ancient Order of the Hibernians

The image shows a framed document for the Division No. 1 Ancient Order of Hibernians, Windsor Locks, Connecticut. The document lists the names of deceased members in a table. The table has two main sections, each with columns for NAMES, ENTERED, DIED, and No. Burial Place. The first section contains handwritten entries for several members, including James, Daniel, and John, with their respective dates of entry and death, and burial locations. The second section is empty.

NAMES	ENTERED	DIED	No. Burial Place	NAMES	ENTERED	DIED	No. Burial Place
James, Daniel	Sept 28, 1877	Oct 12, 1882	23	James, Daniel			
Island, Catholic			21	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			22	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			23	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			24	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			25	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			26	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			27	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			28	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			29	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			30	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			31	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			32	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			33	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			34	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			35	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			36	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			37	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			38	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			39	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			40	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			41	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			42	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			43	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			44	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			45	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			46	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			47	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			48	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			49	Island, Catholic			
Island, Catholic			50	Island, Catholic			

There was a Hibernian Glee Club in Windsor Locks in 1892, according to the *Windsor Locks Journal* of January 15, 1892, but we do not know if that was affiliated with the AOH. The first mention of Division 1 of the Ancient Order of Hibernians was in the May 3, 1895 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal*. That article is presented below because it contains so much information on the group at that time.

IN MEMORIAM.

At a special meeting of Division No. 1, Ancient Order of Hibernians, of Windsor Locks, Conn., held in their hall April 9th, 1895, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted.

WHEREAS—It has been the will of the Almighty Disposer of events to remove from our midst our late worthy and esteemed brother, Stephen Sullivan, who departed this life April 8th, 1895, at the age of 45 years, and a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians of Windsor Locks.

WHEREAS—The intimate relations which existed between our deceased brother and the members of this Division render it proper that we should place on record our appreciation of his services as a true Hibernian and his merits as a man worthy of the confidence and love of his fellow-men.

Resolved—That we deplore the loss of Brother Stephen Sullivan with deep feelings of regret, softened only by the confident hope that his spirit is with those who, having fought the good fight, are enjoying perfect happiness in a better world.

Resolved—That we tender to his afflicted family our sincere condolence and earnest sympathy in their affliction at the loss of one who was a good father, devoted husband and upright man.

Resolved—That the members of this Division attend his funeral in a body, wearing the regalia of the order, to pay the last honors to his remains, and to be present at a mass for the repose of his soul.

Resolved—That the charter of this Division be draped in mourning for a period of thirty days.

Resolved—That these resolutions be entered upon the minutes of this Division, and that a copy of them be sent to the family of our deceased brother, and that they be published in the Windsor Locks JOURNAL.

WILLIAM F. RABBETT, } Committee
DANIEL L. SHEA, } on
JOHN B. ARCHER, } Resolutions.

This article verifies that the Windsor Locks contingent of the AOH was called "Division 1".

We know from the Oct. 24, 1902 *Windsor Locks Journal*, that there was a "Division No. 7" of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Windsor Locks.

The Aug. 14, 1908 issue of the newspaper described an upcoming excursion by the local Hibernians to Savin Rock for a state convention of the AOH, and that over 1,200 people were expected. The Jan. 14, 1916 issue of the newspaper said that a Hibernian Fair would be held at the Burnap Opera House

that evening. All of this tells us that the Windsor Locks Division of the AOH was very active in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

An indication can be found of the amount of club activity from the number of articles about it in the Windsor Locks Journal in each decade. There was one article in the 1880s. The 1890s, 1900s, 1910s, 1920s and 1930s, averaged eight articles about the AOL per decade. There was one in the 1940s, none in the 1950s and two in the 1960s. We know from the photo of the AOH document, that Division 1 of the AOH was active in the 1870s and 1880s. All of this tells us that the Windsor Locks Division of the AOH was active from the 1870s through the 1930s.

The Jan 22, 1942 issue of the newspaper mentioned the installation of officers of both the local Division and the Hartford Division of the AOH will be held at Mooney's Hall in Windsor Locks. That tells us that Windsor Locks' Division 1 of the AOH was still in existence in 1942.

Later articles about the AOH in the Windsor Locks Journal refer to events of the Hartford Division of the AOH, without mentioning the Windsor Locks Division. That indicates that the Windsor Locks Division might not have been a separate group any longer. After 1964, the Windsor Locks Journal no longer has any articles about the AOH. The Ancient Order of Hibernians does have a history website for its history in Connecticut, but that doesn't mention Windsor Locks.

<http://www.ctaoh.com/connecticut-aoh-history/>

More research is needed to conclusively determine the dates at which the Windsor Locks Division of the AOH was formed and ended. We have learned that it was very active from about 1875 through the 1930s, and that it did exist in 1942. We know that people from Windsor Locks were going to the Hartford Division events up through about 1964.

Conclusion

The immigrants who came to Windsor Locks needed to socialize with people from the country that they came from. It was a way to relax with people who spoke their native language, and who could help them learn to weave their way into their new homeland. The Italians, Polish and Irish formed social clubs to do this.

This chapter looked at five ethnic social clubs: three Italian, one Polish and one Irish. They all did the same thing. They held dinners, dances, games, and had business meetings. They thrived. They were highly active groups when they began. Slowly, the original immigrants passed on, and their children and grandchildren were well acclimated to American ways. The membership of the ethnic social clubs dwindled. The problems that the original ethnic clubs solved no longer existed.

Two Italian and one Polish social club were “private clubs”. They owned the building that their club was in. They needed members who paid dues and who came to the clubhouse to buy drinks and food. They needed to have more income than expenses if they wanted to continue to exist. They did the only thing they could do, and opened up membership to whoever wanted to come to the clubhouse. They were no longer “ethnic clubs”. They are still “private clubs”. Private clubs have an advantage over public bars. You can smoke while you drink at a private club, but you cannot at a public bar. So the IAC, IPC and the PNH continue to exist and to evolve.

The Windsor Locks chapter of the Ancient Order of Hibernians started earlier than the Italian and Polish clubs. We have seen no evidence that it ever owned its own building/clubhouse. However, it went through the decrease in activity that the other Windsor Locks ethnic clubs did as the original members got older. The evolution of all of the Windsor Locks ethnic social clubs was similar.

Sources

- The issues of the *Windsor Locks Journal* that were referenced were listed throughout the chapter.
- The photo of both Polish homes was provided by Chet Pohorylo, along with information about the history of the club.
- The photo of the document of Windsor Locks’ Chapter 1 of the Ancient order of Hibernians came from Ed Woodward, who bought it at auction about 2013. He asked the auctioneers if they knew where it came from, or who owned it last. They did not know.

Chapter 39

Maple Hill: The Burnap Estate

Windsor Locks has had two grand Victorian Mansions, Ashmere and Maple Hill. Ashmere was covered in the first volume of *Windsor Locks History*. This chapter is the story of Dr. Sidney R. Burnap's estate, which was called Maple Hill. It is an 8,800 square foot Victorian Italianate style structure which was built about 1863 by Mr. Lucius B. Chapman, who served as a First Selectman of Windsor Locks. When he died in 1876, the house and part of Mr. Chapman's land was auctioned off. Dr. Sidney Rogers Burnap purchased the house and the land. The area from Main Street to the house was known as "Burnap's Grove," and was the scene of many town socials and gatherings.

Dr. Burnap died in 1901, and his wife sold the property in 1914 to Alexandro Santamaria, whose family used it as a boarding house until the mid 1990s. Dennis and Martha Jarvis bought the house in about 2002. They refurbished it and turned it into an apartment house. The property has only had four owners from 1863 to 2019.

http://articles.courant.com/2006-10-10/news/0610100725_1_candlelight-tour-mansion-carvings

As of this writing (March, 2019), the Burnap estate is up for sale. According to the *Journal Inquirer* issue of February 27, 2019, a New York couple, Zinde Sheng and Dong Xaio Ni, have filed an application with the Windsor Locks Planning and Zoning Commission to turn the Burnap estate into a Chinese cultural retreat, calligraphy school, research center and "Bed and Breakfast". The two, who have filed the application, are under contract to buy the property. As of this time, the application to the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the purchase of the property are in process.

The mansion was built out of handmade bricks, and the walls are from 6" to 10" thick. It still has its original woodwork. The living room and the dining room have ornate plaster ceilings and medallions. The first two floors have 12' ceilings and the original ornate radiators. The first floor has floor-to-ceiling windows, many of which have the original glass. You will see the very fancy architectural windows in the photos below. The main house has 27 rooms. Only 1.9 acres of the original 100 acres remain. The rest has been subdivided.

<https://www.oldhouses.com/1105>

The Burnap's has been nicknamed "The Castle". Others call it "the Burnap Mansion". The entire estate, including the land and the mansion has been called "Maple Hill" since it was first owned by Mr. Chapman. Below, we will see photos of the Burnap Mansion in its heyday at the turn of the 1900s, and then as it exists now (2019).

The Burnap Mansion around 1900

In the following photos, which were taken in the late 1800s or early 1900s, when the Burnap Mansion was the center of Windsor Locks high society. Most of the people in the photos are unidentified. One was labelled "Bean," but there is no information as to who he is. The other person is identified as Miss Ruby Laird. The following explains who she is. In 1901, Dr. Burnap's daughter, Clara Annie Burnap, married Mr. George Alonzo Harmon, of Suffield. The wedding was at the Burnap Mansion, and it was a grand affair, with over 400 guests. The groom's niece was the flower girl at the wedding. Her name was Ruby Laird.



The Burnap Mansion



"Bean" at Maple Hill, in front of horse barn.



Unidentified people by Burnap Mansion



Ruby Laird near horse barn at Maple Hill

The following photo shows the path from the Burnap mansion to the railroad station on Main Street which can be seen at the upper left of the photo.



Path from Maple Hill to the Train Station

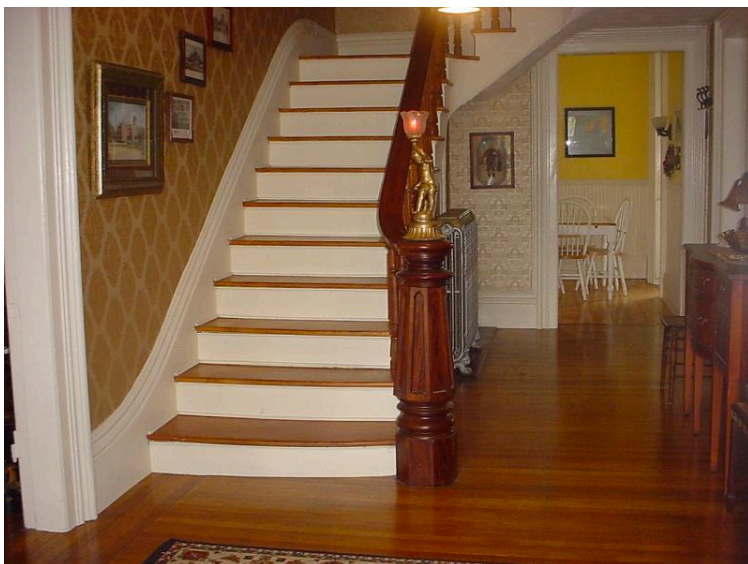
The grand mansion, its grounds, the horse barn, the easy access to the railroad station, and the dress of the guests at the mansion, combine to display the grandeur of the estate.

Burnap Mansion in 2019

The Burnap Mansion is, at this time (2019), is beautiful. It has been redecorated, as can be seen in the photos below. The mansion has 14 bedrooms, 4 full baths, one half-bath, 3 stories, and 8,800 square feet. Following are six photos of the mansion.







Conclusion

As of this writing in 2019, the Burnap mansion is close to 160 years old. It retains only has a small part of the 100 acres that the first owner had. However, as can be seen in the photos, the mansion was and still is a magnificent structure. Its size, and the elegance of its design, capture your attention. The windows, the interior woodwork, the fancy ceilings, the extra thick walls, the brick horse barn and the beautiful grounds combine to radiate elegance. The strength of its construction has permitted it to remain a viable structure for more than a century and a half.

There was a time in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when Windsor Locks had a small cadre of very wealthy business owners. The difference between their wealth and the wealth of the common citizen was massive. Since that time, Windsor Locks has lost its super-wealthy citizenry, and become a solidly middle class community. The other grand, Victorian mansion, the Ashmere, became an Inn for a while. Then it was torn down to make room for Dexter Plaza.

The Burnap mansion is the only vestige of very wealthy citizenry that remains in Windsor Locks. Back in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the extravagant parties of the very rich were regularly chronicled in the society sections of the Springfield newspapers. That includes the social lives of Dr. and Mrs Burnap.

After having served Mr. Chapman's and Dr. Burnap's families well, and after having been a successful boarding house and apartment house, the Mansion retains its beauty and appeal. As of this writing (March 2019), the Burnap estate is under contract for sale to a New York couple who have made an application to the Windsor Locks Planning and Zoning Commission to turn the estate into a Chinese cultural center and a Bed and Breakfast.

Sources

http://articles.courant.com/2006-10-10/news/0610100725_1_candlelight-tour-mansion-carvings, Oct. 10, 2006 , "The Castle Has a Storied Past"

<https://www.oldhouses.com/1105>

Photos of the Burnap Mansion in the 1900 timeframe were from the Windsor Locks Historical Society Website.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/windsor_locks_historical_society/albums/72157676398426754

Windsor Locks Journal, May 10, 1901 , article on Dr. Burnap's daughter's wedding.

Journal Inquirer, February 27, 2019, article entitled "Windsor Locks mansion could become B&B, Chinese cultural center". The *Journal Inquirer* can be accessed at https://www.journalinquirer.com/towns/windsor_locks/

Mickey Danyluk provided information about the Burnap mansion in telephone conversations.

Chapter 40

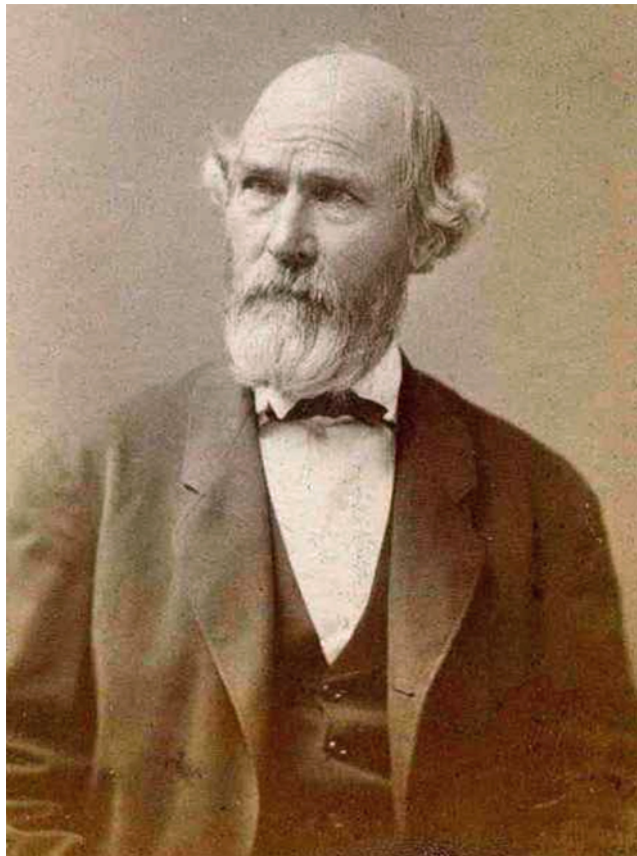
Silas Parmelee: Early Windsor Locks Photographer

Silas Parmelee is a member of the large and ancient Parmelee family, which emigrated from England to America. There is a massive website about the Parmelee family, which you can find at:

<http://www.thefamilyparmelee.com/home.html>

While the website is very wide, it is very thin. There are hundreds of Parmelees listed on that website, who date back to the 1500s, but there is very little information on each of them. They have one page about Silas Parmelee which has the following portrait of Silas. That page stated that by 1870, Silas he had become a photographer in Windsor Locks, Conn. This picture of him was taken by Van Doorn Photographs, 244 Fulton St., Brooklyn, NY, on Oct. 15, 1879.

<http://www.thefamilyparmelee.com/x01-0731.html>



Silas Parmelee 1812-1887

From the next photograph, we learn that Silas was a photographer in Windsor Locks. Here is the photo of the front of his shop.



Front of Silas Parmelee's Photography Studio on Center St., Windsor Locks

This photograph was found at:

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/254101603949747859/>

The following information was provided about the photograph. "Silas Parmelee, Photographer," written on verso. This photographer was located in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. The image shows the Photographer's Gallery sign and a horse sled out front. There are chemical bottles on a platform outside the window. On back is written "Center St. W.L. opposite Horton House." Caption identified by M.S.E. Horton."

The Parmelee webpage gave the lineage of Silas Parmelee as follows. Silas, Darius, Elihu, Nathaniel, Nathaniel, Nathaniel, John, John. Each person in the list is the son of the next person in the list. Information about the earliest two people on that list was provided on the following page:

<http://www.thefamilyparmelee.com/faq-conn1.html>

The people described on that page were the first Parmelees in Connecticut. The earliest was John Parmelee, who died in 1583.

Not much more is known about Silas, except that we have a photograph of a woman who is believed to be his mother. "Elizabeth "Betsey" (Moran) Parmelee (ca 1799-aft 1880). Here is her portrait.

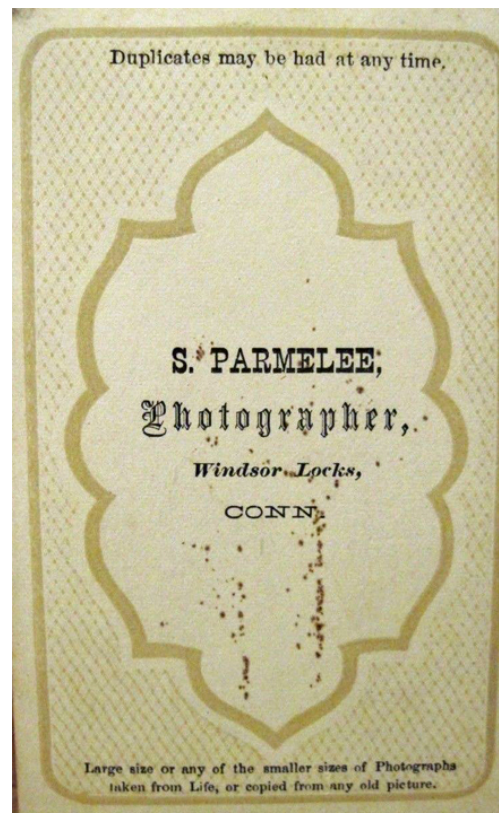
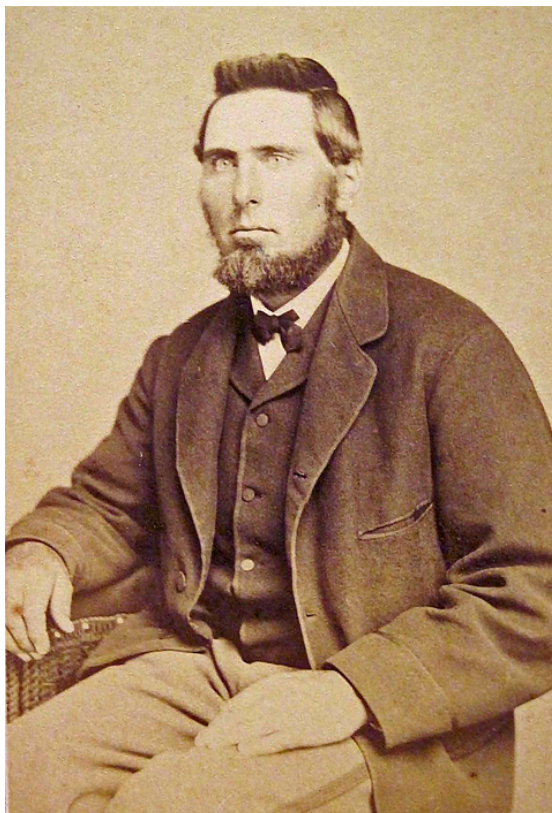
The marriage records of Springfield include: Jane J. and Silas Parmelee, residing in Suffield, CT on January 14, 1846. The ceremony was performed by Rev. J.G.Warren. However, it is not known whether the Silas Parmelee who lived in Suffield was the Silas Parmelee who had a photography studio in Windsor Locks

<http://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Hampden/Springfield/MarriagesB.shtml>



This woman may be Elizabeth Parmelee, Silas' mother.

The following portraits what were taken by Silas Parmelee of Windsor Locks. Here is a portrait of a man, together with a photo of the cover of the folder that the portrait was in.



Following are three more portrait photos taken by Silas Parmelee.



Sources:

<http://www.thefamilyparmelee.com/home.html>

<http://www.thefamilyparmelee.com/x01-0731.html>

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/254101603949747859/>

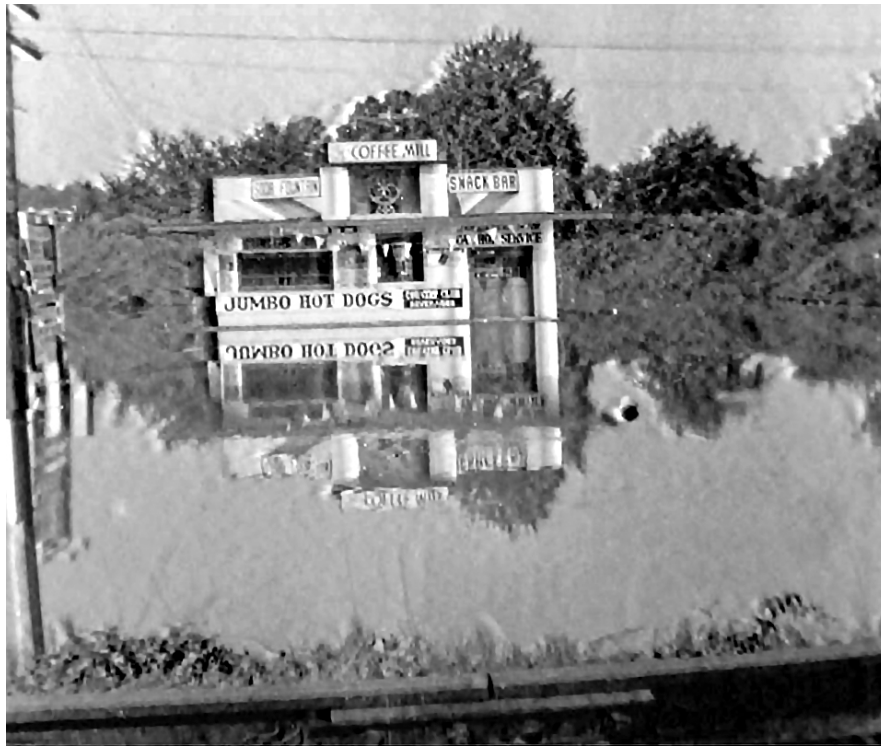
<http://www.thefamilyparmelee.com/faq-conn1.html>

<http://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Hampden/Springfield/MarriagesB.shtml>

Chapter 41

The Coffee Mill

The Coffee Mill was an early, locally-owned, sandwich shop on South Main Street. It was at 71 South Main Street, but that address no longer exists. To get there, you went south on South Main Street, past Stella's Charles Ten restaurant (now the Hungry Rhino) and then past Webb Street. The Coffee Mill was a little before where the train station now is. It was not far from the South Main Street entrance to I-91. Before I-91, one continued on South Main Street to get to Hartford, so the Coffee Mill had a good deal of road traffic from which to attract customers. That area was known as the Pine Meadow section of Windsor Locks. The following photograph was taken during the 1955 flood.



The Coffee Mill, South Main St., ~ 1955 flood

This article is based on a dozen advertisements and articles in the *Windsor Locks Journal* and the *Springfield Union* between 1947 and 1961.

The following ad in the *Windsor Locks Journal* on Oct. 21, 1947 was the first ad for the The Coffee Shop.

COFFEE MILL

Now Serving

RANCH STYLE FRIED CHICKEN

In the Basket — Orders to Go

Open 3 p. m. Until ? ? ?

71 South Main St., Windsor Locks

Telephone Windsor Locks 1676

The following ad (below, left) in the *Windsor Locks Journal* of September 2, 1948, shows that the proprietor of The Coffee Mill was Glenn Bartley, and that they served sandwiches, ice cream and soft drinks, featuring their signature “The Canal Boat Sunday”.

The April 21, 1949 ad (below, right) expands the menu to include grinders, french fries and fried clams. Back in 1949, a hot dog only cost 15 cents.

A NEW SNACK BAR
Now open in Windsor Locks

The Coffee Mill
At 73 South Main Street
(Just South of Webb Street)

SANDWICHES ICE CREAM
SOFT DRINKS

Featuring
The Canal Boat Sundae

Plenty of Parking Space
At The Coffee Mill
Glenn Bartley, Propr.

Windsor Locks Journal 09/02/1948

THE
COFFEE MILL
IS NOW OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

STOP IN
and try our
JUMBO HOT DOGS
ONLY 15c
WHY PAY MORE?

WE SERVE
COLD DRINKS
ICE CREAM
SANDWICHES
GRINDERS
FRENCH FRIES
FRIED CLAMS

WINDOW SERVICE
AT
The COFFEE MILL
71 So. Main Street Windsor Locks, Conn.

Windsor Locks Journal 04/21/1949

An article in the April 20, 1950 *Springfield Union* said that two juvenile brothers from Hartford were found guilty of breaking and entering The Coffee Mill. They were apprehended in Southbridge, MA. The article said: "Most of the loot was recovered, including about \$20 in change."

An article in the February 14, 1952 *Windsor Locks Journal* said that there was a fire in The Coffee Mill. The firemen had to use a line of hose from the booster tank on the fire truck to extinguish the fire before it endangered nearby property, and that no damage was done.

According to an article in the *Springfield Union* on January 6, 1953, an attempt to rob the Coffee Mill was foiled. John O. Johansen of Hartford was arrested at 2:30AM, when police found him inside the building. The policeman was making his usual rounds when this happened. Mr. Johansen used a 14 inch screwdriver to break into the building, and to open the jukebox. He had taken a box of nickels from the jukebox. A number of similar break-ins had occurred in town, including the Bidwell lumber yard. Police Chief Whitten said that Mr. Johansen had worked on farms in the area during the previous year.

The May 2, 1954 ad in the *Windsor Locks Journal* said that The Coffee Mill is under new management, but didn't say who it was. Carhop service has been introduced.

THE COFFEE MILL
UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Featuring CARHOP Service

Specializing In

Fried Clams French Fries Grinders
Salami Hot Sausage Meat Balls

FOUNTAIN SERVICE

Sundaes Milk Shakes Sodas

Enjoy A Snack While Sitting In Your Car!

The Coffee Mill
South Main Street Windsor Locks

Windsor Locks Journal, 05/02/1954

We know from the photo at the beginning of this article, that The Coffee Mill was damaged by the 1955 flood.

The January 5, 1956 *Windsor Locks Journal* showed the basketball score of a match between The Coffee Mill team and the Jewish Center team of Springfield. The fact that it sponsored a basketball team tells us a bit about the restaurant. Below and to the right is a matchbook cover from The Coffee Mill

Jewish Center Beaten, 74-58

Jewish Community Center basketball team was outscored by 20-4 from the foul line last night while losing, 74-58, to **The Coffee Mill Drive-In of Windsor Locks**.

The Springfield team will be home Sunday night against Bridgeport in the New England JCC championship game. Summary:

Coffee Mill				JCC			
	R	F	Pts		R	F	Pts
Hurley lf	4	2	10	Norkin rb	7	0	14
Courtney rf	2	5	21	Miller lb	5	2	12
Pfeiffer c	5	8	18	Searman lb	0	0	0
Jubrey lb	9	3	21	Weiss c	5	0	10
Corbin lb	0	0	0	Kittredge c	0	0	0
Ryan lb	0	0	0	Grant c	3	2	12
Green rb	5	2	12	Wolf rf	5	0	4
Price rb	2	0	4	Mackler lf	2	0	4
				Cohen lf	0	0	0
Totals	27	20	74	Totals	27	4	38

Windsor Locks Journal 03/05/1956



The Coffee Mill was doing sufficient business to place an ad for full-time help in the December 13, 1956 edition of the *Windsor Locks Journal*. No further mention of The Coffee Mill is found in either the *Windsor Locks Journal* or the *Springfield Union* until February 11, 1960, when they had a story about Alfred P. Balenger, 44, who was the owner of The Coffee Mill. He had been missing for a week. His two automobiles were in their usual spots. He had told others that he was despondent, and was going to jump in the canal. The police dragged the canal, but did not find him.

The *Windsor Locks Journal* had an ad to rent The Coffee Mill in their June 1, 1961 edition. It said that the restaurant had been fully refurbished and was ready to use. No further mention of The Coffee Mill was found in any newspaper. We did learn that the change in ownership in 1954 was from the original owner, Glen Bartley to Alfred Balenger. The business started in 1947 and lasted past the Dec. 13, 1956 ad for full-time help.

Sources:

April 20, 1950 article in the *Springfield Union*

Ads and articles from the *Springfield Union* had the dates listed next to the reference to them.

Ads from *Windsor Locks Journal* had the dates listed next to them.

The photo of the matchbook cover was provided by William Fournier

Chapter 42

The Fish Hatchery



Windsor Locks Fish Hatchery ~1900

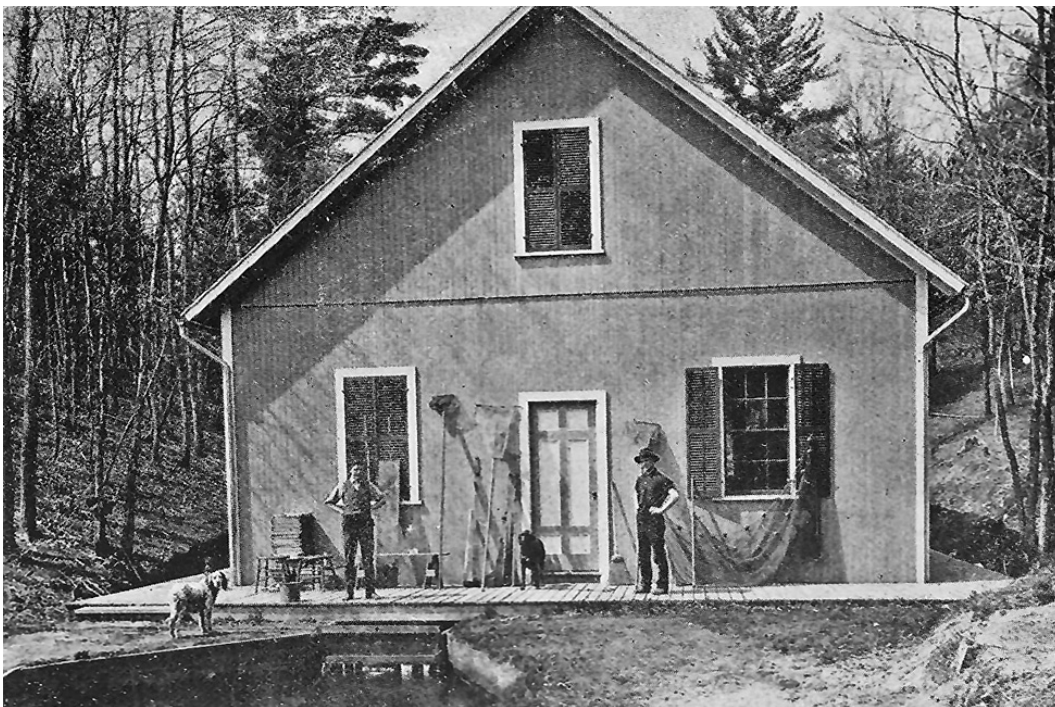
Windsor Locks had a Fish Hatchery on West Spring Street, next to St. Mary's Cemetery from 1892 to 1974. The Fish Hatchery was a popular place from its inception to about 1967. This is the story of the rise and fall of the Windsor Locks Fish Hatchery.

The July 2, 1897 *Windsor Locks Journal* reported on the progress that the Connecticut State Fish and Game Commission in constructing the Fish Hatchery on Kettle Brook, near the West end of St. Mary's Cemetery. The location was chosen because of the availability of a steady flow of clear, cold spring water that is very pure, and was not affected by drought or heavy rains. By 1879, everything necessary had been purchased, and some of the construction had already been completed. The boxes, which were really retaining pools for the fish, were progressing well under the direction of Superintendent H. J. Holdredge, who has had a great deal of experience with fish breeding in Rhode Island. Fifteen of the retaining pools had already been built in the brook. They contained rainbow trout, lake trout, brook trout, and Atlantic salmon. Each of the retaining boxes were from 12 to 15 feet in length

and contained many thousands of baby fish. The fish were fed twice a day with ground meat. It cost almost \$40,000 to build the complete hatchery. In 2019 dollars, that amounts to \$1.2 Million. Here are two early photos of the “Hatch House.”



Windsor Locks Fish Hatchery “Hatch House” - 1900



Windsor Locks Fish Hatchery “Hatch House” ~1900

There was a great deal of interest in Windsor Locks in the Fish Hatchery. A search of the *Windsor Locks Journal* archives showed that there were 275 articles published on that topic between 1897 and 1974, when the Hatchery shut down.

In 1900, Mr E. H. Whitney of Plymouth, MA was hired to be superintendent of the Fish Hatchery. The previous superintendent resigned to take a more lucrative position. The Hatchery was in fine shape. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, Aug.26,1900)



Windsor Locks Fish Hatchery "Rearing Pools" ~1900

In 1903, the Hatchery was booming. The recent "hatch" included about one and a half million brook trout, 250,000 lake trout, and 25,000 landlocked salmon. An office had been built in the Hatchery building for use by the superintendent and his assistant. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, May 8, 1903)

As the years went by, a number of excellent reports about the progress of the Hatchery showed up in the *Windsor Locks Journal*. A very interesting event occurred in 1938, when a 500 gallon still was found by Federal agents just North of the Hatchery grounds in March of 1938. The officers arrested Charles Barberi and Louis Clementi, and confiscated the equipment. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, March 23, 1938)

The Hatchery continued to have very good production as the years went by. In 1946, Mr Kenneth Cobb, became the superintendent of the Hatchery. The fish from this and from the other two Connecticut Hatcheries, were shipped

all over the state. The local Hatchery superintendent did not know where his fish are going to be sent until the trucks showed up to take the fish to the locations that were decided upon by the Fish and Game Commission. (*Windsor Locks Journal*, October 24, 1946.)

In August of 1962, the Hatchery was so busy that it was closed to visitors for a while. Work was being done to expand the facilities. Trout production was being increased by more than ten-fold. The Superintendent and his assistant just didn't have the time to prepare the building for visitors. However, the two other Connecticut Hatcheries, in Burlington and Kensington, remained open to visitors. The August 2, 1962 *Windsor Locks Journal* article provided that data, and then gave a description of the early days at the Windsor Locks Fish Hatchery, saying that the Hatchery was begun in 1892 on state-leased property at next to St. Mary's Cemetery. A permanent building was constructed at that time, Pheasants, partridges and ducks were also hatched and were raised there in the early 1920s.

By 1967, feelings about the Windsor Locks Fish Hatchery had turned. The *Windsor Locks Journal* of March 30, 1967 said that even though the State Fish and Game Commission was offering some opposition, it hoped that the Connecticut Legislature would introduce a bill to consider relocation of the Hatchery on West Spring Street to another section of the State. The newspaper editorial was harshly worded, saying: The petty argument advanced by the Fish and Game Commission that the local area is best for raising trout can be dismissed as trivial. It is a case of plain hard words on whether state legislators think that fish are more important than people."

That tone continued in later years. The Feb. 6, 1969 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal* was pushing hard for the state legislature to pass legislation requiring Windsor Locks to turn the Fish Hatchery into a public recreation and reservoir area.

In 1972, the Town of Windsor Locks bought the 56 acres of land that the Hatchery was on, but plans for what to do with it were not developed. An editorial in the Dec. 27, 1973 *Windsor Locks Journal* said: "It was not expected that there would be full development of the land. It would be good for much of it to remain open space. Still it is a shame that a perfectly good house sits there, unused. There is nothing like a vacant building to attract vandalism. There was an announcement by the park department that any group wishing to use it could fix it up and do so. A little serious planning and some face to face talk among groups in town seems in order."

Then some decisions were made by the town. The task of renovating and furnishing the two story house on the property of the former state fish hatchery was nearly complete, said the *Windsor Locks Journal* of Nov 21, 1974. There were plans for the town's Recreation Department to use the house as a Headquarters. Also a new three bay cinder block garage was built on the

property to be used for maintenance and storage purposes. Here is a photo of the house taken in 1974.



Rebuilt House on former Hatchery land

Below is a photo of the superintendent's house shortly after it had been build at the turn of the century.



Windsor Locks Fish Hatchery Superintendent's House

However, things did not go as planned. A woman with a number of children needed housing and was allowed to use the house. Unfortunately, the house burned down. The three bay garage is now being used for housing ambulances. (information from Bill Fournier). Much of the land was turned into a public recreation area called "Spring Park".

Conclusion

The state of Connecticut built one of their three Fish Hatcheries in Windsor Locks. From its inception in about 1892, until about 1960, the town was in love with the Hatchery. Residents, especially children went to visit the place. Children loved to see the uncountable number of little fish swimming in the tanks in the brick building. It was a prime producer of fish to stock the streams and lakes of Connecticut for more than half a century. Then for reasons that couldn't be uncovered, the town turned against the Fish Hatchery. There was a push to use the land for recreation. By 1975, that had happened. The recreation area is called Spring Park. Not all of the land was used for the park. Ambulances park in a three bay garage on the property. The old brick structure that housed some of the tanks of the Fish Hatchery is long gone.

But great memories remain.

Sources:

The issues of the *Windsor Locks Journal* that were referred are listed in the text.

I asked Bill Fournier, Windsor Locks Historian, if he had any photos of the Fish Hatchery. He didn't but he contacted the Connecticut Fish and Wildlife Commission to the Legislature. Mr. Steve Gephart, who is the Supervising Fisheries Biologist with the DEEP's Fisheries Division, found photos of the Windsor Locks Fish Hatchery in an old report. Thank you very much to Steve Gephart and Bill Fournier for getting these rare photos, which have been hidden from Windsor Locks eyes for almost 120 years. The condition of the scanned photos was a little rough, so I used Photoshop Elements to improve the quality of the photos. (the author)

The Author and His Family

My name is Mel Montemerlo. I grew up in Windsor Locks. I am a creature of the “old Windsor Locks”. I grew up there in the 1940s and 50s when the Main Street was a bustling shopping and social center, and when many still worked in the mills along the canal. My father worked at three mills: the Medlicott, Windsor Locks Paper Co. and Dexters, and he always walked to and from work. Bradley Field had just become a civilian airport and parents took their kids to the airport, parked by the wooden hangar or terminal, and watched the propellor planes take off and land. In the 1940s, almost everyone in Windsor Locks lived between Main Street and West Street. The land between West St. and Turnpike Rd. was mostly farmland.

Many people walked from their home to Main Street to shop. Most families only had one car. There was no air conditioning. 14 and 15 year old kids worked on tobacco during the summers. The milkman delivered to your house, and if you left him a note to do so, he would walk in your house and put your milk in the refrigerator. You drove your garbage to the dump on Spring Street, which always had fires going. Kids bought penny candy at small markets like Johnny Cappa’s, where you could buy a salami, cheese, tomato and lettuce grinder for 50 cents, and a loaf of “Moon Bakery” Italian bread for 25 cents. Going shopping at the A&P was a social experience. You spent as much time talking to people you knew as you did shopping.

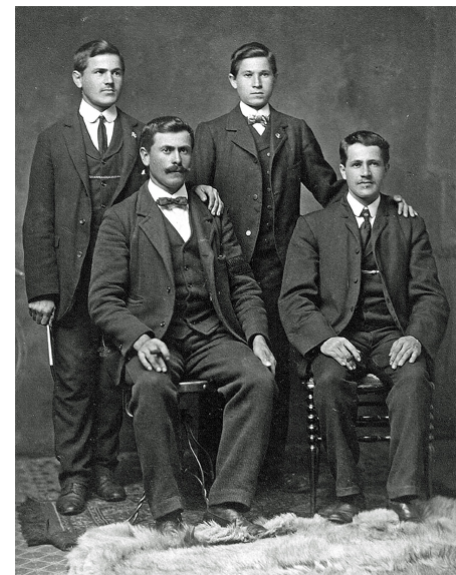
For a treat, families drove to the East Windsor Drive-In to watch a movie, and the kids were often dressed in pajamas. If you wanted to go to a mall, you went to Enfield. If you wanted to shop cheaply, you went to Railroad Salvage. The coffee cake at Windsor Locks Bakery was the best in the world. People came to Windsor Locks from surrounding towns to shop. The Main Street was the center of town life. Richie Quagliaroli drove an old hearse with “The Box From The Locks” painted on it. It didn’t cost much to go to the Rialto Theater on Saturday afternoon. If you needed to get a prescription filled, you went to see Sid at his Modern Drug store or Jim Carroll at Carroll’s pharmacy, where you could get an ice cream cone for a dime. The only hotel in town was Coly’s Hotel on Main Street, across from the Railroad Station. Many kids took a train ride to G. Fox & Co. in Hartford with their mom in August to shop for clothes for the new school year. Kids spent many hours in the “Public Park”, which was later named “Pesci Park”. There was never any trouble in the park.

When I grew up in Windsor Locks, it was an “ethnic” environment. Everyone in my family was Italian. My four grandparents were immigrants from Italy. They spoke Italian at home, and often they would go back and forth between English and Italian in the same sentence. They switched to English when speaking to their grandchildren.

The purpose of this section of a book "About the Author" is to help the reader to get to know a little about the person who wrote the book. I have just given you a short description of my years in Windsor Locks, but I feel that that is not enough. Like all of us, I am a product of my environment. In my youth, my environment was my family. My four grandparents, my parents and their families had a great influence on both me and on the town of Windsor Locks. They deserve to be mentioned here. Both the Colapietro and Montemerlo families have had a significant effect on the town of Windsor Locks.

My mother's parents were Vito and Anna (Lefemine) Colapietro. They were from a small southern Italian town called Turi. Many people from Bari immigrated to Windsor Locks. You will remember some of the names, such as Lefemine, Colapietro, Zaccheo, Borracci, and Bellini. They all came for the same reason. There was no work and no future for them in their homeland. Did they affect the history of Windsor Locks? They did. For example, they brought the tradition of St. Oronzo, the patron saint of Turi, to Windsor Locks. They started the St. Oronzo club as a social club, which fostered the annual St. Oronzo festival, with its parade, Italian music, food and fireworks. Many of them also did well in their new town. There were 15 large buildings in downtown Windsor Locks, which were called "Blocks". "Block" is now an archaic term, which referred to a large commercial, multipurpose building. The group from Turi went on to own two of the 15 Blocks of Windsor Locks! Tommaso Zaccheo owned the Zaccheo Block, across from the bridge, and Vito Colapietro owned the hotel across from railroad station. Mr. Borracci owned "Joe's Market" which later became the Oak Street Market.

Vito Colapietro had three brothers, Pasquale, Leo and Giovanni. All came to Windsor Locks. Three stayed. Giovanni went home. Vito, Pasquale and Leo all owned confectionary stores on Main Street. Vito's store was in the hotel that he owned within ten years of arriving in town from Italy. Leo started the Windsor Locks Macaroni Manufacturing Company, which was on Main Street, but later moved to Springfield. The three of them were successful businessmen, although they had little formal education, and they had no money and spoke no English when they arrived in town. On the right is a portrait of the four brothers.



Vito, Giovanni, Leo & Pasquale Colapietro

Below is a photo of Vito Colapietro's Windsor Locks Hotel in 1927. Unfortunately no visible sign of the effects Vito had on Windsor Locks still remain. The St. Oronzo celebrations are no longer held, and the organization has disbanded. His hotel was demolished in the

Main Street Redevelopment Project. None of that diminishes the effect that he had on Windsor Locks.



Vito Colapietro's Windsor Locks Hotel 1927

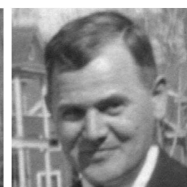


St. Oronzo Parade

On the right are photos of Vito, Anna and their six children. Tonino died before it was two years old. All four sons were in World War II, and all returned safely. Three of Vito and Anna's children stayed in Windsor Locks. John was the only employee of the hotel that his father owned. Tony ran the confectionary store on the street level of the hotel, which was called "Tony's Soda Shoppe". Lena married Leo Montemerlo, and became a teacher. She taught History in Windsor Locks Middle School. She was known as tough but fair. Most probably, she has had some effect on my interest in history.



Anna



Vito



Pete



Tonino



Lena



Tony

***The
Colapietro
Family***



John



Angelo

Leo and Lena Montemerlo had three children: Mel, John and Lenny. Lenny spent his career in the construction business and built many houses in Windsor Locks. John is an excellent artist, sculptor and photographer. He was also president of the Lions Club. I tried to match their accomplishments by writing *Windsor Locks History*. Below is a photo of Lena and Leo Montemerlo, and a photo of Leo with his three sons: Lenny, Mel and John.



Leo and Lena Montemerlo



Lenny, Leo, Mel & John Montemerlo 2005

Many of Vito and Anna's descendants still live in and around Windsor Locks. As you can see from the above, Vito, Anna and their descendants have had a significant and positive effect on Windsor Locks.

Now let's turn to the Montemerlo side of my family. By the early 1900s, economic hard times were just as bad in northern Italy as in the South. Silvio and Chiarina (Canevaro) Montemerlo immigrated from the small town of Casalnoceto to Windsor Locks, to try to make a better life for themselves and their children. When they arrived, they already had two children, Ennio and Celia. Here is a photo of Silvio and Chiarina. Silvio was one of the founders of the Italian American Club in Windsor Locks.

Just as so many other immigrants had done, Silvio found a job in the mills along the canal. He got a job at Horton Chuck. They lived on the lower part of Spring Street. They had seven children: Ennio, Celia, Leo, Hugh, Guido, Larry and Esther.

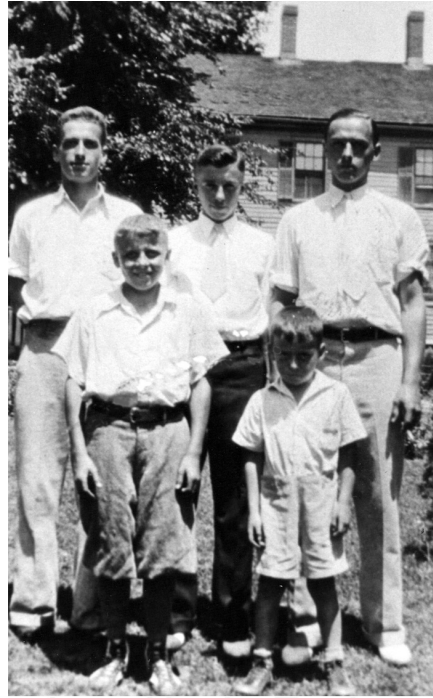


Chiarina (Canevaro) and Silvio Montemerlo

In World War I, Silvio served in the Home Guard. You can see him in the next photo, in uniform, and with his young sons, Leo and Ennio. Beside that photo is one of the five brothers.



**Silvio (WWI Home Guard)
Leo & Ennio**



**Leo, Hugh, Ennio
Guido & Larry**

Below you can see Silvio and Chiarina's sons in military uniforms.



**Larry, Hugh, Ennio, and
Guido with Bernie Seaha**



Laurence Montemerlo

Leo was in the Naval Reserves. In the photo on the right, he was serving in Cuba in 1938. Leo also served as a supernumary in the Windsor Locks Police Department, as you can see on the right.



**Leo Montemerlo, 1938
Naval Reserves, Cuba**



**Leo Montemerlo, 1941
W.L. Police Dept.
Supernumary**

The Montemerlo family has served in the Windsor Locks Fire Department. Larry and Guido were firefighters. Guido served for a very long time. In 1996, there was a celebration of his 50th year of service. Larry's son, David became a firefighter. Guido's son, David, did also, and then David's son, Guido, became a third-generation firefighter.



Stephen Montemerlo



Guido Montemerlo



**David Guido
Montemerlo**

It wasn't just the Montemerlo men who served Windsor Locks. It was also Guido's wife, Barbara (Silk) Montemerlo, who was a Windsor Locks Police dispatcher. I couldn't find a photo of her at her desk in the Police Station. Here is a 1993 photo of Barbara with her family.



Back: Christopher, Greg, Liza, Renee 1993
Middle: Rebecca, Sue, Amy, Sarah
Front: Guido, Barbara, David Jr., Kendall

Silvio was a forward-thinking man. He used to tell his children that it wouldn't be long before everyone had a telephone, so the telephone company building on Spring Street would have to grow. He said it would be good to own land near the telephone company, and it is good to own housing that you can rent out. Celia, Esther and Larry heeded his advice. Celia, who worked at the telephone company, had two rooming houses on the side of St. Mary's Church. Larry bought land and developed rental units. Near his home, he has two rental building which were subdivided into apartments. They were referred to as the "grey building" and the "brick building". He also bought land. Later, he sold much of it to a developer. That resulted in much new housing in Windsor Locks. Another other was "Montemerlo Avenue". The Montemerlo Avenue sign is in a photo below, with two generations of Mel and Mary Beth Montemerlo's family. His children and grandkids were very impressed that there was a "Montemerlo Avenue" in Windsor Locks. Esther and Charlie Preli also had rental houses. Silvio raised his children to be business persons.



**Freddy, Evan &
Audrey Hinder
2017**



**Amy, Patrick &
Mike Montemerlo
1987**

MONTEMERLO AVENUE

Below are a few more group photos of Silvio Montemerlo's family.



Montemerlo party, Windsor Locks, June 2000



Lawrence, Guido, Celia, Lena, Esther, Leo, Rose, Ennio, Hugh
Leo & Lena's Wedding, September 8, 1941



*Hugh, Ennio, Charlie, Larry, Claire, Guido, Leo
Betty, Rose, Esther Celia, Barbara, Lena
Wedding of Larry and Claire Montemerlo, Sept. 24, 1976*



Corinne



David



Francis



Ann Marie



Richard



Robert



John H.



Mary Ellen



Thomas



James



Leonard



John A.



Melvin



Steven



Patricia



Carol



Donna

***Silvio & Chiarina
Montemerlo's
Grandchildren***

Below is a photo of Silvio and Chiarina's seven children, as adults.



Esther, Larry, Guido, Celia, Ennio, Leo, Hugh -1991

Since the title of the section of the book is "The Author and His Family," here is a photo of my part of the family.



**Mel and Mary Beth Montemerlo
with their children and grandchildren, 2015**

The 10th Annual Montemerlo Ravioli Day in Windsor Locks - 2018

The Montemerlo family of Windsor Locks is a fun-loving group. In 2008, they started the tradition of having an annual "Ravioli Day," which takes place a little after Christmas. It is in remembrance of the ravioli dinner that Chiarina used to make every Christmas. Celia carried on that tradition.

Ravioli Day started small, but in ten years, 80 Montemerlos attended the 2018 ravioli dinner. The head of the kitchen crew is veteran professional chef, Jimmy Montemerlo, who has a large crew of women doing the work. Participants bring drinks, salads, and desserts. Here are some photos from the 2018 Montemerlo Ravioli Day. The first is of Jimmy and the kitchen crew.



Next are photos taken in the kitchen in preparation for the big party.



Next is a photo of Lenny and Mary Montemerlo's family at the 2018 Ravioli Day dinner.



Lenny & Mary Montemerlo's family - 2018

Finally there is a photo of the group of carolers who sang Italian Christmas carols at the Montemerlo Ravioli Day dinner.



Singing Italian Christmas Carols

The End

This brings us to the end of Volume II of *Windsor Locks History*. I hope that it has brought you enjoyment and learning. I hope it has brought back great memories. I hope that it has strengthened your love of your home town, Windsor Locks, CT. I hope that you show the photos to your children and grandchildren and tell them about the “old” Windsor Locks.

Researching and writing the two volumes of *Windsor Locks History* has taken me from mid-2016 to mid-2019, and I have enjoyed it thoroughly. It gave me the opportunity to converse with many current Windsor Locks citizens and with ex-patriates, who once lived in town but have moved away. It gave me the opportunity to spend a great deal of time with other Windsor Locks historians such as Bill Fournier, Mickey Danyluk, Frank Baron, Bob Pearce, Chet Pohorylo, and Phil Devlin. Putting the drafts of most of the 80 chapters of the two books on Windsor Locks Facebook websites, caused many Windsor Locks enthusiasts to send me information and photos to use in the two books. It also put me in touch again with many friends from my youth, and allowed me to make many new friends. Putting this book together was truly a group effort, and I thank every one of you who helped.

I wish you the best.

Thank you for reading the *History of Windsor Locks*.

Mel Montemerlo

Bel Air, MD

April 2019



Public School



St. Mary's School



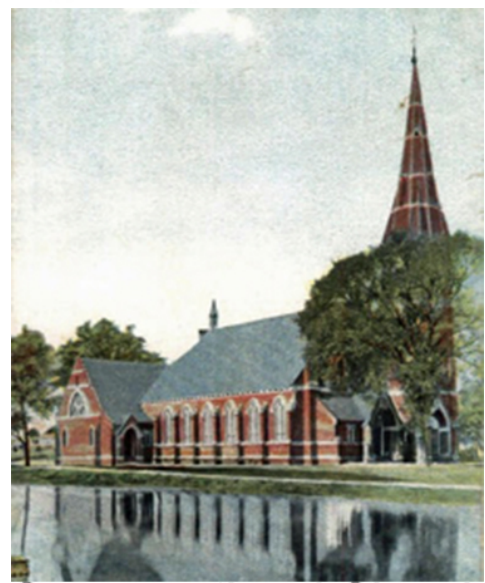
St. Mary's Church



Freight Depot



Memorial Hall



Congregational Church